THE

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BY

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HOUSE BY THE CHURCH-YARD.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING A CERTAIN GENTLEMAN, WITH A BLACK PATCH OVER HIS EYE, WHO MADE SOME VISITS WITH A LADY, IN CHAPELIZOD AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

In the morning, though the wind had somewhat gone down, 'twas still dismal and wild enough; and, to the consternation of poor Mrs. Macnamara, as she sat alone in her window after breakfast, Miss Mag and the Major being both abroad, a hackney-coach drew up at the door, which stood open. The maid was on the step, cheapening fish with a virulent lady who had a sieve-full to dispose of.

A gentleman, with a large, unwholesome face, and a patch over one eye, popped his unpleasant countenance, black wig, and three-cocked hat, out of the window, and called to the coachman to let him out.

Forth he came, somewhat slovenly, his coat not over-well brushed, having in his hand a small

trunk, covered with gilt crimson leather, very dingy, and somewhat ceremoniously assisted a lady to alight. This dame, as she stepped with a long leg, in a black silk stocking, to the ground, swept the front windows of the house from under her velvet hood with a sharp and evil glance; and, in fact, she was Mistress Mary Matchwell.

As she beheld her, poor Mrs. Mack's heart fluttered up to her mouth. and then dropped, with a dreadful plump, into the pit of her stomach. The dingy, dismal gentleman, swinging the red trunk in his hand, swaggered lazily back and forward to stretch his legs over the pavement, and air his large cadaverous countenance, and sniff the village breezes.

Mistress Matchwell in the meantime, exchanging a passing word with the servant, who darkened and drew back as if a ghost had crossed her, gathered her rustling silks about her, and with a few long steps noiselessly mounted the narrow stairs, and stood, sallow and terrible in her sables, before the poor gentlewoman.

With two efforts Mrs. Mack got up, and made a little, and then a great courtesy, and then a little one again, and tried to speak, and felt very near fainting.

"See," says Mary Matchwell, "I must have twenty pounds—but don't take on. You must make an effort, my dear—'tis the last. Come, don't be cast down. I'll pay you when I come

to my property, in three weeks' time; but law expenses must be paid, and the money I must have."

Hereupon Mrs. Mack clasped her hands together in an agony, and "set up the pipes."

M. M. was like to lose patience, and when she did, she looked most feloniously, and in a way that made poor, soft Mrs. Mack quiver.

"'Tis but twenty pounds, woman," she said, sternly. "Hubbub-bub-boo-hoo-hoo," blubbered the fat and miserable Mrs. Macnamara. "It will be all about—I may as well tell it myself. I'm ruined! My Venetian lace—my watch—the brocade not made up. It won't do. I must tell my brother; and I'd rather go out for a charwoman and starve myself to a skeleton, than try to borrow more money."

Mrs. Matchwell advanced her face towards the widow's tearful countenance, and held her in the spell of her dreadful gaze as a cat does a bird.

"Why, curse you, woman, do you think 'tis to rob you I mean?—'tisn't a present even—only a loan. Stop that blubbering, you great old mouth! or I'll have you posted all over the town in five minutes. A *loan*, madam; and you need not pay it for three months—three whole months—*there!*

Well, this time it ended as heretofore—poor Mrs. Mack gave way. She had not a crown-piece, indeed, that she could call her own; but M. M. was obliging, and let her off for a bill of

exchange, the nature of which, to her dying day the unhappy widow could never comprehend, although it caused her considerable affliction some short time subsequently.

Away went Mary Matchwell with her prize, leaving an odour of brandy behind her. Her dingy and sinister squire performed his clumsy courtesies, and without looking to the right or the left, climbed into the coach after her, with his red trunk in his hand; and the vehicle was again in motion, and gingling on at a fair pace in the direction of Nutter's house, The Mills, where her last visit had ended so tragically.

Now, it so happened that just as this coach, with its sombre occupants, drew up at The Mills, Doctor Toole was standing on the steps, giving Moggy a parting injunction, after his wont; for poor little Mrs. Nutter had been thrown into a new paroxysm by the dreadful tidings of her Charlie's death, and was now lying on her bed, and bathing the pillow in her tears.

"Is this the tenement called The Mills, formerly in the occupation of the late Charles Nutter—eh?" demanded the gentleman, thrusting his face from the window, before the coachman had got to the door.

"It is, sir," replied Toole, putting Moggy aside, and suspecting, he could not tell what, amiss, and determined to show front, and not averse from hearing what the visit was about. "But Mrs.

Nutter is very far from well, sir; in fact, in her bed-chamber, sir, and laid upon her bed."

"Mrs. Nutter's *here*, sir," said the man phlegmatically. He had just got out on the ground before the door, and extended his hand toward Mary Matchwell, whom he assisted to alight. "*This* is Mrs. Nutter, relict of the late Charles Nutter, of The Mills, near Knockmaroon, in the parish of Chapelizod."

"At your service, sir," said Mary Matchwell, dropping a demure, scornful courtesy, and preparing to sail by him.

"Not so fast, ma'am, if you please," said Toole, astonished, but still sternly and promptly enough. "In with you Moggy, and bar the kitchen door."

And shoving the maid back, he swung the door to, with a slam. He was barely in time, and Mary Matchwell, baffled and pale, confronted the Doctor, with the devil gleaming from her face.

"Who are you, man, that dare shut my own door in my face?" said the beldame.

"Toole's my name, madam," said the little Doctor, with a lofty look and a bow. "I have the honour to attend here in a professional capacity."

"Ho!" a village attorney," cried the fortune-teller, plainly without having consulted the cards or the planets. "Well, sir, you'd better stand aside, for I'm the Widow Nutter, and this is my

house; and burn me, but, one way or another, in I'll get."

"You'd do well to avoid a trespass, ma'am, and better to abstain from house-breaking; and you may hammer at the knocker till you're tired, but they'll not let you in," rejoined Toole. "And as to you being the Widow Nutter, ma'am, that is widow of poor Charles Nutter, lately found drowned, I'll be glad to know, ma'am, how you make *that* out."

"Stay, madam, by your leave," said the cadaverous, large-faced man, interposing. "We are here, sir, to claim possession of this tenement and the appurtenances, as also of all the money, furniture, and other chattels whatsoever of the late Charles Nutter; and being denied admission, we shall then serve certain cautionary and other notices, in such a manner as the Court will, under the circumstances, and in your presence, being, by your admission, the attorney of Sarah Hearty, calling herself Nutter"——

"I did not say I was," said Toole, with a little toss of his chin.

The gentleman's large face here assumed a cunning leer.

"Well, we have our thoughts about that, sir," he said. "But by your leave, we'll knock at the hall-door.

"I tell you what, sir," said Toole, who had no reliance upon the wisdom of the female garrison,

and had serious misgivings lest at the first stout summons the maids should open the door, and the ill-favourod pair establish themselves in occupation of poor Mrs. Nutter's domicile, "I'll not object to the notices being received. There's the servant up at the window there—but you must not make a noise: Mrs. Nutter, poor woman, is sick and hypochondriac, and can't bear a noise; but I'll permit the services of the notices, because, you see, we can afford to snap our fingers at them. I say, Moggy, open a bit of that window, and take in the papers that this gentleman will hand you. *There*, sir—on the end of your cane, if you please—very good."

"'Twill do, she has them. Thank you, miss," said the legal practitioner, with a grin. "Now, ma'am, we'd best go to the Prerogative Court."

Mary Matchwell laughed one of her pale malevolent laughs up at the maid in the window, who stood there, with the papers in her hand, in a sort of horror.

"Never mind," said Mary Matchwell, to herself, and, getting swiftly into the coach, she gleamed another ugly smile up at the window of The Mills, as she adjusted her black attire.

"To the Prerogative Court," said the attorney to the coachman.

"In that house I'll lie to-night," said Mary Matchwell, with a terrible mildness, as they drove away, still glancing back upon it, with her pecu-

liar smile; and then she leaned back, with a sneer of superiority on her pallid features, and the dismal fatigue of the spirit that rests not, looked savagely out from the deep, haggard windows of her eyes.

When Toole saw the vehicle fairly off, you may be sure he did not loose time in getting into the house, and there conning over the papers, which puzzled him unspeakably.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH DOCTOR TOOLE, IN HIS BOOTS, VISITS MR. GAMBLE, AND SEES AN UGLY CLIENT OF THAT GENTLEMAN'S; AND SOMETHING CROSSES AN EMPTY ROOM.

"HERE's a conspiracy with a vengeance!" muttered Toole, "if a body could only make head or tail of it. Widow!—Eh!—we'll see: why, she's like no woman ever *I* saw. Mrs. Nutter, forsooth;" and he could not forbear laughing at the conceit. "Poor Charles! 'tis ridiculous—though, upon my life, I don't like it. It's just possible it may be all as true as gospel—they're the most devilish looking pair I've seen out of the dock—curse them—for many a day. I would not wonder if they were robbers. The *widow* looks consumedly like a man in petticoats—hey!—devilish like. I think I'll send Moran and Brien up to sleep to-night in the house. But, hang it! if they were, they would not come out in the daytime to give an alarm. Hollo! Moggy, throw me out one of them papers till I see what it's about."

So he conned over the notice which provoked him, for he could not half understand it, and he was very curious.

"Well, keep it safe, Moggy," said he. "H'm—

it *does* look like law business, after all, and I believe it *is*. No—they're not housebreakers, but robbers of another stamp—and a worse, I'll take my davy."

"See," said he, as a thought struck him, "throw me down both of them papers again—there's a good girl. They ought to be looked after, I dare say, and I'll see the poor master's attorney to-day, d'ye mind? and we'll put our heads together—and, that's right—*relict* indeed!"

And, with a solemn injunction to keep doors locked and windows fast, and a nod and a wave of his hand to Mistress Moggy, and muttering half a sentence or an oath to himself, and wearying his imagination in search of a clue to this new perplexity, he buttoned his pocket over the legal documents, and strutted down to the village, where his nag awaited him saddled, and Jimmie walking him up and down before the Doctor's hall-door.

Toole was bound upon a melancholy mission that morning. But, though properly a minister of life, a doctor is also conversant with death, and inured to the sight of familiar faces in that remarkable disguise. So he spurred away with more coolness, though not less regret, than another man, to throw what light he could upon the subject of the inquest which was to sit upon the body of poor Charles Nutter.

The little Doctor, on his way to Ringsend, without the necessity of diverging to the right or

left, drew bridle at the door of Mr. Luke Gamble, on the Blind Quay, attorney to the late Charles Nutter, and, jumping to the ground, delivered a rattling summons thereupon.

It was a dusty, dreary, wainscotted old house—indeed, two old houses intermarried—with doors broken through the partition walls—the floors not all of a level—joined by steps up and down—and having three great staircases, that made it confusing. Through the windows it was not easy to see, such a fantastic mapping of thick dust and dirt coated the glass.

Luke Gamble, like the house, had seen better days. It was not his fault; but an absconding partner had well nigh been his ruin: and, though he paid their liabilities, it was with a strain, and left him a poor man, shattered his connexion, and made the house too large by a great deal for his business.

Doctor Toole came into the clerks' room, and was ushered by one of these gentlemen through an empty chamber into the attorney's sanctum. Up two steps stumbled the physician, cursing the house for a place where a gentleman was so much more likely to break his neck than fast, and found old Gamble in his velvet cap and dressing-gown, in conference with a long-faced, pale, and pock-marked elderly man, squinting unpleasantly under a black wig, who was narrating something slowly, and with effort, like a man whose memory is la-

bouring to give up its dead, while the attorney, with his spectacles on his nose, was making notes. The speaker ceased abruptly, and turned his lean, pallid visage and jealous, oblique eyes on the intruder.

Luke Gamble looked embarrassed, and shot one devilish angry glance at his clerk, and then made Doctor Toole very welcome.

When Toole had ended his narrative, and the attorney read the notices through, Mr. Gamble's countenance brightened, and darkened and brightened again, and, with a very significant look, he said to the pale, unpleasant face, pitted with small-pox—

"M. M.," and nodded.

His companion extended his hand toward the papers.

"Never mind," said the attorney; "there's that here will fix M. M., in a mighty tight vice."

"And who's M. M., pray?" inquired Toole.

"When were these notices served, Doctor?" asked Mr. Gamble.

"Not an hour ago; but, I say, who the plague's M. M.?" answered Toole.

"M. M." repeated the attorney, smiling grimly on the backs of the notices that lay on the table; "why there's many queer things to be heard of M. M.; and the town, and the country, too, for that matter, is like to know a good deal more of

her before long; and who served them—a process-server, or who?"

"Why, a fat, broad, bull-necked rascal, with a double chin, and a great round face, the colour of a bad suet-dumplin', and a black patch over his eye," answered Toole.

"Very like—was he alone?" said Gamble.

"No—a long, sly she-devil in black, that looked as if she'd cut your windpipe, like a cat in the dark, as pale as paper, and mighty large, black, hollow eyes.

"Ay—that's it," said Gamble, who, during this dialogue, had thrown his morning-gown over the back of the chair, and got on his coat, and opened a little press in the wall, from which he took his wig, and so completed his toilet.

"That's it?" repeated Toole; "what's it?—what's *what?*"

"Why, 'tis David O'Regan—dirty Davy, as we call him. I never knew him yet in an honest case; and the woman's M. M."

"Hey! to be sure—a woman—I know—I remember;" and he was on the point of breaking out with poor Mrs. Macnamara's secret, but recovered in time. "That's the she fortune-teller, the witch, M. M., Mary Matchwell; 'twas one of her printed cards, you know, was found lying in Sturk's blood. Dr. Sturk, you remember, that they issued the warrant for, against our poor friend, you know."

"Ay, ay—poor Charles—poor Nutter. Are you going to the inquest?" said Gamble; and, on a sudden, stopped short, with a look of great fear, and a little beckon of his hand forward, as if he had seen something.

There was that in Gamble's change of countenance which startled Toole, who, seeing that his glance was directed through an open door at the other end of the room, skipped from his chair and peeped through it. There was nothing, however, visible but a tenebrose and empty passage.

"What did you see—eh? What frightens you?" said Toole. "One would think you saw Nutter—like—like."

Gamble looked horribly perturbed at these words.

"Shut it," said he, nearing the door, on which Toole's hand rested. Toole took another peep, and did so.

"Why, there's nothing there—like—like the women down at the Mills there," continued the Doctor.

"What about the women?" inquired Gamble, not seeming to know very well what he was saying, agitated still—perhaps, intending to keep Toole talking.

"Why, the women—the maids, you know—poor Nutter's servants, down at the Mills. They swear he walks the house, and they'll have it they saw him last night."

"Pish! sir—'tis all conceit and vapours—

women's fancies—a plague o' them all. And where's poor Mrs. Nutter?" said Gamble, clapping on his cocked-hat, and taking his cane, and stuffing two or three bundles of law papers into his coat pockets.

"At home—at the Mills. She slept at the village, and so missed the ghost. The Macnamaras have been mighty kind. But when the news was told her this morning, poor thing, she would not stay, and went home; and there she is, poor little soul, breaking her heart."

Mr. Gamble was not ceremonious; so he just threw a cursory and anxious glance round the room, clapped his hands on his coat pockets, making a bunch of keys ring somewhere deep in their caverns. And all being right—

"Come along, gentlemen," says he, "I'm going to lock the door;" and, without looking behind him, he bolted forth abstractedly into his dusty ante-room.

"Get your cloak about you, sir—remember your *cough*, you know—the air of the streets is sharp," said he, with a sly wink, to his ugly client, who hastily took the hint.

"Is that *coach* at the door?" bawled Gamble to his clerks in the next room, while he locked the door of his own snuggery behind him; and being satisfied it was so, he conducted the party out by a side door, avoiding the clerks' room, and so down stairs.

"Drive to the Courts," said the attorney to the coachman; and that was all Toole learned about it that day. So he mounted his nag, and resumed his journey to Ringsend at a brisk trot.

I suppose, when he turned the key in his door, and dropped it into his breeches' pocket, the gentleman attorney assumed that he had made every thing perfectly safe in his private chamber, though Toole thought he had not looked quite the same again after that sudden change of countenance he had remarked.

Now, it was a darksome day, and the windows of Mr. Gamble's room were so obscured with cobwebs, dust, and dirt, that even on a sunny day they boasted no more than a dim religious light. But on this day a cheerful man would have asked for a pair of candles, to dissipate the twilight and sustain his spirits.

He had not been gone, and the room empty ten minutes, when the door through which he had seemed to look on that unknown something that dismayed him, opened softly—at first a little—then a little more—then came a knock at it—then it opened more, and the dark shape of Charles Nutter, with rigid features and white eye-balls, glided stealthily and crouching into the chamber, and halted at the table, and seemed to read the endorsements of the notices that lay there.

CHAPTER III.

HOW A GENTLEMAN PAID A VISIT AT THE BRASS CASTLE, AND THERE READ A PARAGRAPH IN AN OLD NEWSPAPER.

DANGERFIELD was, after his wont, seated at his desk, writing letters, after his early breakfast, with his neatly-labelled accounts at his elbow. There was a pleasant frosty sun glittering through the twigs of the leafless shrubs, and flashing on the ripples and undulations of the Liffey, and the redbreasts and sparrows were picking up the crumbs which the housekeeper had thrown for them outside. He had just sealed the last of half-a-dozen letters, when the maid opened his parlour-door, and told him that a gentleman was at the hall-step, who wished to see him.

Dangerfield looked up with a quick glance—

"Eh?—to be sure. Show him in."

And in a few seconds more, Mr. Mervyn, his countenance more than usually pale and sad, entered the room. He bowed low and gravely, as the servant announced him.

Dangerfield rose with a prompt smile, bowing also, and advanced with his hand extended, which,

as a matter of form rather than of cordiality, his visiter took, coldly enough, in his.

"Happy to see you here, Mr. Mervyn—pray, take a chair—a charming morning for a turn by the river, sir."

"I have taken the liberty of visiting you, Mr. Dangerfield"——

"Your visit, sir, I esteem an honour," interposed the lord of the Brass Castle.

A slight and ceremonious bow from Mervyn, who continued—

"For the purpose of asking you directly and plainly for some light upon a matter in which it is in the highest degree important I should be informed."

"You may command me, Mr. Mervyn," said Dangerfield, crossing his legs, throwing himself back, and adjusting himself to attention.

Mervyn fixed his dark eyes full and sternly upon that white and enigmatical face, with its round glass eyes and silver setting, and those delicate lines of scorn he had never observed before, traced about the mouth and nostril.

"Then, sir, I venture to ask you for all you can disclose or relate about one Charles Archer."

Dangerfield cocked his head on one side, quizzically, and smiled the faintest imaginable cynical smile.

"I can't *disclose* anything, for the gentleman

never told me his secrets; but all I can relate is heartily at your service."

"Can you point him out, sir?" asked Mervyn, a little less sternly, for he saw no traces of a guilty knowledge in the severe countenance and prompt, unembarrassed manner of the gentleman who leaned back in his chair, with the clear bright light full on him, and his leg crossed so carelessly.

Dangerfield smiled, shook his head gently, and shrugged his shoulders the least thing in the world.

"Don't you know him, sir?" demanded Mervyn.

"Why, sir," said Dangerfield, with his chin a little elevated, and the tips of his fingers all brought together, and his elbows resting easily upon the arms of his chair, and altogether an involuntary air of hauteur, "Charles Archer, perhaps you're not aware, was not exactly the most reputable acquaintance in the world; and my knowledge of him was very slight indeed—wholly accidental—and of very short duration."

"May I ask you, if, without leaving this town, you can lay your finger on him, sir?"

"Why, not conveniently," answered Dangerfield, with the same air of cynical amusement. "'Twould reach in that case all the way to Florence, and even then we should gain little by the discovery."

"But you do know him?" pursued Mervyn.

"*I did*, sir, though very slightly," answered Dangerfield.

"And I'm given to understand, sir, he's to be found occasionally in this town?" continued his visiter.

"There's just one man who sees him, and that's the parish clerk—what's his name?—Zekiel Irons—he sees him. Suppose we send down to his house, and fetch him here, and learn all about it?" said Dangerfield, who seemed mightily tickled by the whole thing.

"He left the town, sir, last night; and I've reason to suspect, with a resolution of returning no more. And I must speak plainly, Mr Dangerfield, and say, 'tis no subject for trifling—the fame and fortune of a noble family depend on searching out the truth; and I'll lose my life, Mr. Dangerfield, or I'll discover it."

Still, the old synical, quizzical smile on Dangerfield's white face, who said encouragingly—

"Nobly resolved, sir, upon my honour!"

"And Mr. Dangerfield, if you'll only lay yourself out to help me, with your great knowledge and subtlety—disclosing everything you know or conjecture, and putting me in train to discover the rest—so that I may fully clear this dreadful mystery up—there is no sacrifice of fortune I will not cheerfully make to recompense such immense services, and you may name with confidence your own terms, and think nothing exorbitant."

For the first time Dangerfield's countenance actually darkened and grew stern, but Mervyn could not discern whether it was with anger or deep thought, and the round spectacles returned his intense gaze with a white reflected sheen, sightless, and meaningless as death.

But the stern mouth opened, and Dangerfield, in his harsh, brief tones, said—

"You speak without reflection, sir, and had nigh made me lose my temper; but I pardon you; you're young, sir, and besides, know probably little or nothing of me. Who are you, sir, who thus think fit to address me, who am by blood and education as good a gentleman as any alive? The inducements you're pleased to offer—you may address elsewhere—they are not for me. I shall forget your imprudence and answer frankly any questions, within my knowledge, you please to ask."

"You mentioned Irons, the clerk, Mr. Dangerfield, and said that he sees Charles Archer. Do you mean it?"

"Why, thus I mean it. He *thinks* he sees him; but, if he does, upon my honour, he sees a ghost," and Dangerfield chuckled merrily.

"Pray, Mr. Dangerfield, consider me, and be serious, and in Heaven's name explain," said Mervyn, speaking, evidently, in suppressed anguish.

"Why, you know—don't you? the poor fellow's not quite right here," and he tapped the centre of

his own towering forehead with the delicate tip of his white middle finger. "I've seen a little of him; he's an angler, so am I; and he showed me the fishing of the river, here, last summer, and often amused me prodigiously. He's got some such very odd maggots! I don't say, mind ye, he's *mad*, there are many degrees, and he's quite a competent parish clerk. He's only wrong on a point or two, and one of them is Charles Archer. I believe for a while he thought *you* were he; and Dangerfield laughed his dry, hard chuckle.

"Where, sir, do you suppose Charles Archer is now to be found?" urged Mervyn.

"Why, what remains of him, in Florence," answered Dangerfield.

"You speak sir, as if you thought him dead."

"Think? I know he's dead. I knew him but three weeks, and visited him in his sickness—was in his room half an hour before he died, and attended his funeral," said Dangerfield.

"I implore of you, sir, as you hope for mercy, don't trifle in this matter," cried Mervyn, whose face was white and shining, like that of a man about to swoon under an operation.

"Trifle! What d'ye mean, sir?" barked out Dangerfield, rabidly.

"I mean, sir, *this*—I've information he's positively living, and can relieve my father's memory from the horrible imputation that rests upon it. You know who I am?"

"Ay, sir, Lord Castlemallard told me."

"And my life I cheerfully devote to the task of seizing and tracing out the bloody clue of the labyrinth in which I'm lost."

"Good—'tis a pious as well as a prudent resolve," said Dangerfield, with a quiet sneer. "And now, sir, give me leave to say a word. Your information that Charles Archer is living, is not worth the breath of the madman that spoke it, as I'll presently show you. By an odd chance, sir, I required this file of newspapers, last week, to help me in ascertaining the date of Sir Harry Wyatt's marriage. Well, only last night, what should I hit on but this. Will you please to read?"

He had turned over the pages rapidly, and then he stopped at this little piece of news, packed up in a small paragraph at the bottom of a column, and, pointing his finger to it, he slid the volume of newspapers over to Mervyn, who read—

"Died, on the 4th of August, of a lingering disease, at his lodgings in Florence, whither he had gone for the improvement of his health, Charles Archer, Esq., a gentleman who some three years since gave an exceeding clear evidence against Lord Dunoran, for the murder of Mr. Beauclerc, and was well known at Newmarket. His funeral, which was private, was attended by several English gentlemen, who were then at Florence."

Mervyn, deadly pale, with gleaming eyes, and

hand laid along his forehead, as if to screen off an insupportable light and concentrate his gaze upon the words, read and re-read these sentences with an agony of scrutiny such as no critic ever yet brought to bear upon a disputed passage in his favourite classic. But there was no possibility of fastening any consolatory interpretation upon the paragraph. It was all too plain and outspoken.

"'Tis possible this may be true—*thus* much. *A* Charles Archer is dead, and yet another Charles Archer, the object of my search, still living," said Mervyn.

"Hey! that did'nt strike me," said Dangerfield, as much amused as was consistent with moderately good breeding. "But I can quite account, Mr. Mervyn," he continued, with a sudden change of tone and manner, to something almost of kindness, "for your readiness to entertain any theory not quite destructive of hopes, which, notwithstanding, I fear, rest simply on the visions of that poor hypochondriac, Irons. But, for all that, 'tis just possible that something may strike either you or me in the matter not quite so romantic—hey? But still something—— You've not told me how the plague, Charles Archer, could possibly have served you. But, on that point, perhaps, we can talk another time. I simply desire to say, that any experience or ability I may possess, are heartily at your service whenever you please to task them, as my good wishes are already."

So, stunned, and like a man walking in a dream—all his hopes shivered about his feet—Mervyn walked through the door of the little parlour in the Brass Castle, and Dangerfield, accompanying him to the little gate which gave admission from the high-road to that tenement, dismissed him there, with a bow and a pleasant smile; and, standing for a while, wiry and erect, with his hands in his pockets, he followed him, as he paced dejectedly away, with the same peculiar smile.

When he was out of sight, Dangerfield returned to his parlour, smiling all the way, and stood on the hearthrug, with his back to the fire. When he was alone, a shadow came over his face, and he looked down on the fringe with a thoughtful scowl—his hands behind his back—and began adjusting and smoothing it with the toe of his shoe.

"Sot, fool, and poltroon—triple qualification for mischief—I don't know why he still lives. Irons—a new vista opens, and this d——d young man!" All this was not, as we sometimes read, "mentally ejaculated," but quite literally muttered, as I believe every one at times mutters to himself. "Charles Archer living—Charles Archer dead—or, as I sometimes think, neither one nor t'other quite—half man, half corpse—a vampire—there is no rest for thee: no sabbath in the days of thy work. Blood—blood—blood—'tis tiresome. Why should I be a slave to these d——d secrets. I don't think 'tis my judgment, so much

as the devil that holds me here. Irons has more brains than I—instinct—calculation—which is oftener right? Miss Gertrude Chattesworth, a mere whim, I think I understand her game too. I'll deal with that to-morrow. I'll send Daxon the account, vouchers, and cheque for Lord Castlemallard—tell Smith to sell my horses, and, by the next packet—hey!" and he kissed his hand, with an odd smirk, like a gentleman making his adieux, "and so leave those who court the acquaintance of Charles Archer, to find him out, and catch their Tartar how they may."

CHAPTER IV.

RELATING HOW THE CASTLE WAS TAKEN, AND HOW MISTRESS MOGGY TOOK HEART OF GRACE.

THAT evening there came to the door of the Mills, a damsel, with a wide basket on her arm, the covering of which being removed, a goodly show of laces, caps, fans, washballs, buckles, and other attractions, came out like a parterre of flowers, with such a glow as dazzled the eyes of Moggy, at the study window.

"Would you plaze to want any, my lady?" inquired the pedlar.

Moggy thought they were, perhaps, a little bit too fine for her purse, but she could not forbear longing and looking, and asking the prices of this bit of finery and that, at the window; and she called Betty, and the two maids conned over the whole contents of the basket.

At last she made an offer for an irresistible stay-hook of pinckbeck, set with half-a-dozen resplendent jewels of cut glass, and after considerable chaffering, and a keen encounter of their wits, they came at last to terms, and Moggy ran out to the kitchen for her money, which lay in a brass snuff-box, in a pewter goblet, on the dresser

As she was counting her coin, and putting back what she did not want, the latch of the kitchen door was lifted from without, and the door itself, pushed and shaken. Though the last red gleam of a stormy sunset was glittering among the ivy leaves round the kitchen window, the terrors of last night's apparition were revived in a moment, and, with a blanched face, she gazed on the door, expecting, breathlessly, what would come.

The door was bolted and locked on the inside, in accordance with Doctor Toole's solemn injunction; and there was no attempt to use violence. But a brisk knocking began thereat; and Moggy, encouraged by hearing the voices of Betty and the vender of splendours at the little parlour window, and also by the amber sunlight on the rustling ivy leaves, and the loud evening gossip of the sparrows, took heart of grace, and demanded shrilly—

"Who's there?"

A whining beggar's voice asked admission.

"But you can't come in, for the house is shut up for the night," replied the cook.

"'Tis a quare hour you lock your doors at," said the besieger.

"Mighty quare, but so it is," she answered.

"But 'tis a message for the misthress I have," answered the applicant.

"Who from?" demanded the porteress.

"'Tis a present o' some wine, acushla."

"Who from?" repeated she, growing more uneasy.

"Auch! woman, are you going to take it in, or not?"

"Come in the morning, my good man," said she, "for sorrow a foot you'll put inside the house to-night."

"An' that's what I'm to tell them that sent me."

"Neither more nor less," replied she.

And so she heard a heavy foot clank along the pavement, and she tried to catch a glance of the retreating figure, but she could not, though she laid her cheek against the window-pane. However, she heard him whistling as he went, which gave her a better opinion of him, and she thought she heard the road gate shut after him.

So feeling relieved, and with a great sigh, she counted her money over; and answering Betty's shrill summons to the study, as the woman was in haste, with a "Coming, coming this minute," she replaced her treasure, and got swiftly into poor Charles Nutter's little chamber. There was his pipe over the chimney, and his green, and gold-laced Sunday-waistcoat folded on the little wall-nut table by the fire, and his small folio, "Maison Rustique, the Country Farme," with his old green worsted purse set for a marker in it where he had left off reading the night before all their troubles began; and his silk dressing-gown was hanging by the window-frame, and his velvet morning-cap

on the same peg—the dust had settled on them now. And after her fright in the kitchen, all these mementoes smote her with a grim sort of reproach and menace, and she wished the window barred, and the door of the ominous little chamber locked for the night.

"'Tis growing late," said the dealer from without, "and I darn't be on the road after dark. Gi' me my money, good girl; and here, take your stay-hook."

And so saying, she looked a little puzzled up and down, as not well knowing how they were to make their exchange.

"Here," says Moggy, "give it in here." And removing the fastening, she shoved the window up a little bit. "Hould it, Betty; hould it up," said she. And in came the woman's hard, brown hand, palm open, for her money, and the other containing the jewel, after which the vain soul of Moggy lusted.

"That'll do," said she; and crying shrilly, "Give us a lift, sweetheart," in a twinkling she shoved the window up, at the same time kneeling, with a spring, upon the sill, and getting her long leg into the room, with her shoulder under the window-sash, her foot firmly planted on the floor, and her face and head in the apartment. Almost at the same instant she was followed by an ill-looking fellow, buttoned up in a surtout, whose stature seemed enormous, and at sight of whom

the two women shrieked as if soul and body were parting.

The lady was now quite in the room, and standing upright showed the tall shape and stern lineaments of Mary Matchwell. And as she stood she laughed a sort of shuddering laugh, like a person who has just had a plunge in cold water.

"Stop that noise," said she, recognising Betty, who recognised her with unspeakable terror. "I'm the lady that came here, you know, some months ago, with Mrs. Macnamara; and I'm Mrs. Nutter, which the woman up-stairs *is not.* I'm Mrs. Nutter, and *you're my* servants, do ye mind? and I'll act a fair mistress by you, if you do me honest service. Open the hall-door," she said to the man, who was by this time also in the room. And forth he went to do her bidding, and a gentleman, who turned out to be that respectable pillar of the law whom Mr. Gamble in the morning had referred to as "Dirty Davy," entered. He was followed by Mrs. Mary Matchwell's maid, a giggling, cat-like gipsy, with a lot of gaudy finery about her, and a withered, devilment leering in her face; and a hackney-coach drove up to the door, which had conveyed the party from town; and the driver, railing in loud tones, after the manner of this kind in old times, at all things, reeking of whiskey and stale tobacco, and cursing freely, pitched in several trunks, one after the other; and, in fact, it became perfectly clear that

M. M. was taking possession. And Betty and Moggy, at their wits' end between terror and bewilderment, were altogether powerless to resist, and could only whimper a protest against the monstrous invasion, while poor little Sally Nutter up-stairs, roused by the wild chorus of strange voices from the lethargy of her grief, and even spurred into active alarm, locked her door, and then hammered with a chair upon the floor, under a manaical hallucination that she was calling I know not what or whom to the rescue.

Then Dirty Davy read aloud, with due emphasis, to the maids, copies, as he stated, of the affidavits sworn to that day by Mistress Mary Matchwell, or as he called her, Mrs. Nutter, relict of the late Charles Nutter, gentleman, of the Mills, in the parish of Chapelizod, barony of Castleknock, and county of Dublin, deposing to her marriage with the said Charles Nutter having been celebrated in the Church of St. Clement Danes, in London, on the 7th April, 1750. And then came a copy of the marriage certificate, and then a statement how, believing that deceased had left no "will" making any disposition of his property, or naming an executor, she applied to the Court of Prerogative for letters of administration to the deceased, which letters would be granted in a few days; and in the meantime the bereaved lady would remain in possession of the house and chattels of her late husband.

All this, of course, was so much "Hebrew-Greek," as honest Father Roach was wont to phrase it, to the scared women. But M. M.—νυκτι ἐοικως—fixing them both with her cold and terrible gaze, said quite intelligibly—

"What's your name?"

"Moggy Sullivan, if you please, ma'am."

"And what's yours?"

"Elizabeth — Betty they call me — madam; Elizabeth Burke, if you please, madam."

"Well, then, Moggy Sullivan and Elizabeth Burke, harkee both, while I tell you a thing. I'm mistress here by law, as you've just heard, and you're my servants; and if you so much as wind the jack or move a tea-cup, except as I tell you, I'll find a way to punish you; and if I miss to the value of a pin's head, I'll indict you for a felony, and have you whipt and burnt in the hand—you know what that means. And now, where's Mistress Sarah Harty? for she must pack and away."

"Oh! ma'am, jewel, the poor misthress."

"*I'm* the mistress, slut."

"Ma'am, dear, she's very bad."

"*Where* is she?"

"In her room, ma'am," answered Betty, with blubbered cheeks.

"Where are you going, minx?" cried M. M., with a terrible voice and look, and striding toward the door, from which Moggy was about to escape.

Now, Moggy was a sort of heroine, not in the vain matter of beauty, for she had high cheek bones, a snub nose, and her figure had no more waist, or other feminine undulations, than the clock in the hall; but like that useful piece of furniture, presented an oblong parallelogram, unassisted by art; for, except on gala days, these homely maidens never sported hoops. But she was, nevertheless, a heroine of the Amazonian species. She tripped up Pat Morgan, and laid that athlete suddenly on his back, upon the grass plot before the hall door, to his eternal disgrace, when he "offerd" to kiss her, while the fiddler and tambourine-man were playing. She used to wring big boys by the ear; overawe fishwives with her voluble invective; put dangerous dogs to rout with sticks and stones, and evince, in all emergencies, an adventurous spirit and an alacrity for battle.

For her, indeed, as for others, the spell of "M. M.'s" evil eye and witchlike presence was at first too much; but Moggy rallied, and, thus challenged, she turned about at the door and stoutly confronted the intruder.

"Minx, yourself, you black baste, I m goin' just wherever it plases me best, and I'd like to know who'll stop me; and first ma'am, by your lave, I'll tell the mistress to lock her door, and keep you and your rake-helly squad at the wrong side of it, and then, ma'am, wherever the fancy

takes me next—and that's how it is, and my sarvice to your ladyship."

Off went Moggy, with a leer of defiance and a snap of her fingers, cutting a clumsy caper, and rushed like a mad cow up the stairs, shouting all the way, "Lock your door, ma'am—lock your door."

Growing two or three degrees whiter, M. M., so soon as she recovered herself, glided in pursuit, like the embodiment of an evil spirit, as perhaps, she was, and with a gleam of insanity, or murder, in her eye, which always supervened when her wrath was moved.

The sullen face of the bailiff half lighted up with a cynical grin of expectation, for he saw that both ladies were game, and looked for a spirited encounter. But Dirty Davy spoiled all by interposing his person, and arresting the pursuit of his client, and delivering a wheezy expostulation close in her ear.

"'Tis a strange thing if I can't do what I will with my own—fine laws, i'faith!"

"I only tell you, madam, and if you do, it may embarrass us mightily by-and-bye."

"I'd wring her neck across the banister," murmured M. M.

"An' now, plase your ladyship, will I bring your sarvice to the ladies and gentlemen down in the town, for 'tis there I'm going next," said Moggy, popping in at the door, with a mock courtesy, and a pugnacious cock in her eye, and a look

altogether so provoking and warlike as almost tempted the bailiff, at the door to clap her on the back, and cry, had he spoken Latin, *macte virtute puer!*

"Catch the slut. You shan't budge—not a foot—hold her," cried M. M. to the bailiff.

"Baugh!" was his answer.

"See, now," said Davy, "Madam Nutter's not serious—you're *not*, ma'am? We don't detain you, mind. The door's open. There's no false imprisonment or duress, mind ye—thanking you all the same Miss for your offer. We won't detain you, ha, ha! No, I thank you. Chalk the road for the young lady, Mr. Redmond."

And Davy fell to whisper energetically again in M. M.'s ear.

And Moggy disappeared. Straight down to the town she went, and to the friendly Dr. Toole's house, but he was not expected home from Dublin till morning. Then she had thoughts of going to the barrack, and applying for a company of soldiers, with a cannon, if necessary, to retake the Mills. Then she bethought her of good Dr. Walsingham, but he was too simple to cope with such seasoned rogues. General Chattesworth was too far away, and not quite the man either, no more than Colonel Strafford; and the young beaux, "them Captains, and the like, 'id only be funnin' me, and knows nothing of law business." So she pitched upon Father Roach.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH IRISH MELODY PREVAILS.

Now, Father Roach's domicile was the first house in the Chapel lane, which consisted altogether of two, not being very long. It showed a hall-door, painted green—the national hue—which enclosed, I'm happy to say, not a few of the national virtues, chief among which reigned hospitality. As Moggy turned the corner, and got out of the cold wind under its friendly shelter, she heard a stentorian voice, accompanied by the mellifluous drone of a bagpipe, concluding in a highly decorative style the last verse of the "Colleen Rue."

Respect for this celestial melody, and a desire to hear a little more of what might follow, held Moggy on the steps, with the knocker between her finger and thumb, unwilling to disturb by an unseasonable summons the harmonies from which she was, in fact, separated only by the thickness of the window and its shutter. And when the vocal and instrumental music came to an end together with a prolonged and indescribable groan and a grunt from the songster and the instrument, there broke forth a shrilly chorus of female cackle, some in admiration and some in laughter; and the

voice of Father Roach was heard lustily and melodiously ejaculating "More power to you, Pat Mahony!"

As this pleasant party all talked together, and Moggy could not clearly unravel a single sentence, she made up her mind to wait no longer, and knocked with good emphasis, under cover of the uproar.

The maid, who had evidently been in the hall, almost instantaneously opened the door; and with a hasty welcome, full of giggle and excitement, pulled in Moggy by the arm, shutting the door after her; and each damsel asked the other, "An' how are you, and are you elegant?" and shaking her neighbour by both hands. The clerical handmaid, in a gallopping whisper in Moggy's ear, told her "'Twas a weddin' party, and such tarin' fun she never see—such a dancin' and singin', and laughin' and funnin'; and she must wait a bit, and see the quality," a portion of whom, indeed, were visible as well as overpoweringly audible through the half-open door of the front parlour; "and there was to be a thunderin' fine supper—a round of beef, and two geese, and a tubful of oysters," &c., &c.

Now I must mention that this feast was, in fact, in its own way, more romantically wonderful than that of the celebrated wedding of Camacho the Rich, and one of the many hundred proofs I've met with in the course of my long pilgrimage that the honest prose of every-day life is often ten

times more surprising than the unsubstantial fictions of even the best epic poets.

The valiant Sir Jaufry, it is true, was ordered to a dungeon by the fair Brunissende, who so soon as she beheld him, nevertheless became enamoured of the knight, and gave him finally her hand in wedlock. But if the fair Brunissende had been five and forty, or by'r lady, fifty, the widow of a tailor, herself wondrous keen after money, and stung very nigh to madness by the preposterous balance due (as per ledger), and the inexhaustible and ingenious dodges executed by the insolvent Sir Jaufry, the composer of that chivalric romance might have shrunk from the happy winding-up as bordering too nearly upon the incredible.

Yet good Father Roach understood human nature better. Man and woman have a tendency to fuse. And given a good-looking fellow and a woman, no matter of what age, who but deserves the name, and bring them together, and let the hero but have proper opportunities, and deuce is in it if nothing comes of the matter. Animosity is no impediment. On the contrary 'tis a more advantageous opening than indifference. The Cid began his courtship by shooting his lady-love's pigeons, and putting her into a pet and a frenzy. The Cid knew what he was about. Stir no matter *what* passions, provided they *be* passions, and get your image well into your lady's head, and you may repeat, with like success, the wooing (which

superficial people pronounce so unnatural) of crook-backed Richard and the Lady Anne. Of course, there are limits. I would not advise, for instance, a fat elderly gentleman, bald, carbuncled, dull of wit, and slow of speech, to hazard that particular method, lest he should find himself the worse of his experiment. My counsel is for the young, the tolerably good-looking, for murmuring orators of the silver-tongue family, and romantic athletes with coaxing ways.

Worthy Father Roach constituted himself internuncio between Mahony, whom we remember first in his pride of place doing the honours of that feast of Mars in which his "friend" Nutter was to have carved up the great O'Flaherty on the Fifteen Acres, and next, *quantum mutatus ab illo!* a helpless but manly captive in the hands of the Dublin bailiffs, and that very Mrs. Elizabeth Woolly, relict and sole executrix of the late Timotheus Woolly, of High-street, tailor, &c., &c., who was the cruel cause of his incarceration.

Good Father Roach, though a paragon of celibacy, was of a gallant temperament, and a wheedling tongue, and unfolded before the offended eye of the insulted and vindictive executrix so interesting a picture of "his noble young friend, the victim of circumstance, breaking his manly heart over his follies and misfortunes;" and looking upon her, Mrs. Woolly, afar off, with an eye full of melancholy and awe, tempered with, mayhap,

somewhat of romantic gallantry, like Sir Walter Raliegh from the Tower window on Queen Elizabeth, that he at length persuaded the tremendous "relict" to visit her captive in his dungeon. This she did, in a severe mood, with her attorney, and good Father Roach; and though Mahony's statement was declamatory rather than precise, and dealt more with his feelings than his resources, and was carried on more in the way of an appeal to the "leedy" than as an exposition to the man of law, leaving matters at the end in certainly no clearer state than before he began, yet the executrix consented to see the imprisoned youth once more, this time dispensing with her attorney's attendance, and content with the protection of the priest, and even upon that, on some subsequent visits, she did not insist.

And so the affair, like one of those medleys of our Irish melodies arranged by poor M. Jullien, starting with a martial air, breathing turf and thunder, fire and sword, went off imperceptibly into a pathetic and amorous strain. Father Roach, still officiating as internuncio, found the dowager less and less impracticable, and at length a treaty was happily concluded. The captive came forth to wear thenceforward those lighter chains only, which are forged by Hymen and wreathed with roses; and the lady applied to his old promissory notes the torch of love, which in a moment reduced them to ashes. And here, at the hermitage

of our jolly Chapelizod priest—for bride and bridegroom were alike of the "ancient faith"—the treaty was ratified, and the bagpipe and the bridegroom, in tremendous unison, splitting the rafters with "Hymen, Hymen, O Hymenœe!"

In the midst of this festive celebration, his reverence was summoned to the hall, already perfumed with the incense of the geese, the onions, the bacon browned at the kitchen-fire, and various other delicacies, toned and enriched by the vapours that exhaled from the little bowl of punch which, in consideration of his fatigues, stood by the elbow of the piper.

When the holy man had heard Moggy's tale, he scratched his tonsure and looked, I must say, confoundedly bored.

"Now Moggy, my child, don't you see, acuishla, 'tisn't to me you should 'a' come; I'm here, my dear, engaged," and he dried his moist and rubicund countenance, "in one of the sacred offices iv the Church, the sacrament, my dear, iv"—here Mahony and the piper struck up again in so loud a key in the parlour, that as Moggy afterwards observed, "they could not hear their own ears," and the conclusion of the sentence was overwhelmed in "Many's the bottle I cracked in my time." So his Reverence impatiently beckoned to the hall-door which he opened, and on the steps, where he was able to make himself audible, he explained the nature of his present engagement, and referred

her to Doctor Toole. Assured, however, that he was in Dublin, he scratched his tonsure once more.

"The divil burn the lot o' them, my dear, an' a purty evenin' they chose for their vagaries—an' law papers too, you say, an' an attorney into the bargain—there's no influence you can bring to bear on them fellows. If 'twas another man, an' a couple more at his back, myself an' Pat Moran 'id wallop them out of the house, an' into the river, be gannies! as aisy as say an *are*."

The illustration, it occurred to him, might possibly strike Moggy as irreverent, and the worthy father paused, and, with up-turned eyes, murmured a Latin ejaculation, crossing himself; and having thus reasserted his clerical character, he proceeded to demonstrate the uselessness of his going.

But Father Roach, though sometimes a little bit testy, and, on the whole, not without faults, was as good-natured an anchorite as ever said mass or brewed a contemplative bowl of punch. If he refused to go down to the Mills, he would not have been comfortable again that night, nor indeed for a week to come. So, with a sigh, he made up his mind, got quietly into his surtout and mufflers which hung on the peg behind the hall-door, clapped on his hat, grasped his stout oak stick, and telling his housekeeper to let them know, in case his guests should miss him, that he was obliged to go out for ten minutes or so on parish business, forth sallied the stout priest, with

no great appetite for knight-errantry, but still anxious to rescue, if so it might be, the distressed princess, begirt with giants and enchanters, at the Mills.

At the Salmon House he enlisted the stalworth Paddy Moran, with the information conveyed to that surprised reveller, that he was to sleep at "Mrs. Nutter's house" that night; and so, at a brisk pace, the clerical knight, his squire, and demoiselle-errant, proceeded to the Mills.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH, WHILE THE HARMONY CONTINUES IN FATHER ROACH'S FRONT PARLOUR, A FEW DISCORDS ARE INTRODUCED ELSEWHERE; AND DOCTOR TOOLE ARRIVES IN THE MORNING WITH A MARVELLOUS BUDGET OF NEWS.

THE good people who had established themselves in poor Nutter's domicile did not appear at all disconcerted by the priest's summons. His knock at the the hall-door was attended to with the most consummate assurance by M. M.'s maid, just as if the premises had belonged to her mistress all her days.

Between this hussy and his reverence, who was in no mood to be trifled with, there occurred in the hall some very pretty sparring, which ended by his being ushered into the parlour, where sat Mistress Matchwell and dirty Davy, the "tea-things" on the table, and an odour more potent than that of the Chinese aroma circulating agreeably through the chamber.

I need not report the dialogue of the parties, showing how the honest priest maintained, under sore trial, his character for politeness while addressing a lady, and how he indemnified himself

in the style in which he "discoorsed" the attorney; how his language fluctuated between the persuasively religious and the horribly profane; and how, at one crisis in the conversation, although he had self-command enough to bow to the matron, he was on the point of cracking the lawyer's crown with the fine specimen of Irish oak which he carried in his hand, and, in fact, nothing but his prudent respect for that gentleman's cloth prevented his doing so.

"But, supposin', ma'am," said his Reverence, referring to the astounding allegation of her marriage with Nutter; "for the sake of argumint, it should turn out to be so, in coorse you would not like to turn the poor woman out iv doors, without a penny in her pocket, to beg her bread?"

"Your friend up-stairs, sir, intended playing the lady for the rest of her days," answered M. M., with a catlike demureness, sly and cruel, "at my cost and to my sorrow. For twenty long years, or nigh hand it, she has lived with my husband, consuming my substance, and keeping me in penury. What did she allow me all that time?—not so much as that crust—ha! ha!—no, not even allowed my husband to write me a line, or send me a shilling. I suppose she owes me for her maintenance here—in my house, out of my property—fully two thousand pounds. Make money of that, sir!—and my lawyer advises me to make her pay it."

"Or rather to make her account, ma'am; or you will, if she's disposed to act fairly, take anything you may be advised, to be reasonable and equitable, ma'am," interposed Dirty Davy.

"That's it," resumed Madam Mary. "I don't want her four bones. Let her make up one thousand pounds—that's reason, sir—and I'll forgive her the remainder. But if she won't, then to gaol I'll send her, and there she may rot for me.

"You persave, sir," continued the attorney; "your client—I mane your friend—has fixed herself in the character of an agent—all the late gintleman's money, you see, went through her hands—an agent or a steward to Charles Nutther, desased—an' a coort iv equity 'll hould her liable to account, ye see; an' we know well enough what money's past through her hands annually—an, whatever she can prove to have been honestly applied, we'll be quite willin' to allow; but, you see, we must have the balance!"

"Balance!" says the priest, incensed beyond endurance; "if you stay balancin' here, my joker, much longer, you'll run a raysonable risk of balancin' by the neck out iv one of them trees before the doore."

"So you're threatnin' my life, sir!" said the attorney, with a sly defiance.

"You lie like the divil, sir—savin' your presence, ma'am. Don't you know the differ, sir,

between a threat an' a warnin', you bosthoon?" thundered his Reverence.

"You're sthrivin' to provoke me to a brache iv the pace, as the company can testify," said Dirty Davy.

"Ye lie again, you—you fat crature—'tis thryin' to provoke you to *keep* the pace I am. Listen to me, the both o' yez—the leedy up-stairs, the misthress iv this house, and widow of poor Charles Nutter—Mrs. Sally Nutther, I say—is well liked in the parish; an' if they get the wind o' the word, all I say 's this—so sure as you're found here holdin' wrongful possession of her house an' goods, the boys iv Palmerstown, Castleknock, and Chapelizod, will pay yez a visit you won't like, and duck yez in the river, or hang yez together, like a pair of common robbers, as you unquestionably *are—not*," he added, with a sudden sense of legal liability.

"Who's that?" demanded the lynx-eyed lady, who saw Pat Moran cross the door in the shadow of the lobby.

"That's Mr. Moran, a most respectable and muscular man, come here to keep possession, madam, for Mrs. Sally Nutther, our good friend and neighbour, ma'am," replied the priest.

"As you plase, sir," replied the attorney; "you're tumblin' yourself and your friend into a nice predicament—as good a consthructive ousther, vi et armis, as my client could possibly

desire. Av coorse, sir, we'll seek compensation in the regular way for this violent threspass; and we have you criminally, you'll obsarve, no less than civilly."

"Now, look—ondherstand me—don't affect to misteek, av you plase," said the priest, not very clear or comfortable, for he had before had one or two brushes with the law, and the recollection was disagreeable: "I—Mr. Moran—we're here, sir—the both iv us, as you see—pacibly—and—and—all to that—and at the request of Mrs. Sally Nutther—mind that, too—at her special desire—an' I tell you what's more—if you make any row here—do you mind—I'll come down with the magisthrate an' the soldiers, an' lave it to them to dale with you accordin'—mind ye—to law an' equity, civil, human, criminal, an' divine—an' make money o' that, ye—ye—mountain in labour—savin' your presence, ma'am."

"I thank you—that'll do, sir," said the lawyer, with a lazy chuckle.

"I'll now do myself the honour to make my compliments to Mrs. Sally Nutther," said Father Roach, making a solemn bow to Mrs. Matchwell, who, with a shrill sneer, pursued him as he disappeared with—

"The lady in the bed-room, your Reverence?"

Whereat Dirty Davy renewed his wheezy chuckle.

Nothing daunted, the indignant divine stumped

resolutely upstairs, and found poor Sally Nutter, to whose room he was joyfully admitted by honest Betty, who knew his soft, honest brogue, in a panic, the violence of which had almost superseded her grief. So he consoled and fortified the poor lady as well as he could, and when she urged him to remain in the house all night,

"My dear ma'am," says he, lifting his hand and shaking his head, slowly, with closed eyes, "you forget my ca*rac*ter. Why, the house is full iv faymales. My darlin' Mrs. Nutther, I—I couldn't enthertain sich an idaya; and, besides," says he, with sudden energy, recollecting that the goose might be overdone, "there's a religious duty, my dear ma'am—the holy sacrament waitin'—a pair to be married; but Pat Moran will keep them quiet till mornin', and I'll be down myself to see you then. So my sarvice to you, Mrs. Nutther, and God bless you, my dear ma'am."

And with this valediction the priest departed and from the road he looked back at the familiar outline of the Mills, and its thick clumps of chimneys, and two twinkling lights, and thought of the horrible and sudden change that had passed over the place and the inmates, and how a dreadful curse had scathed them: making it, till lately, the scene of comfort and tranquillity, to become the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

Doctor Toole arrived at ten o'clock next morn-

ing, with news that shook the village. The inquest was postponed to the evening, to secure the attendance of some witnesses who could throw a light, it was thought, on the inquiry. Then Doctor Toole was examined, and identified the body at first confidently.

"But," said he, in the great parlour of the Phœnix, where he held forth, "though the features were as like as two eggs, it struck me the forehead was a thought broader. So, said I, I can set the matter at rest in five minutes. Charles Nutter's left upper arm was broken midway, and I set it; there would be the usual deposit where the bone knit, and he had a sword-thrust through his right shoulder, cicatrized, and very well defined; and he had lost two under-teeth. Well, the teeth *were* gone, but three instead of two, and on laying the arm-bone bare, 'twas plain it had never been broken, and, in like manner, nothing wrong with the right shoulder, and there was nothing like so much deltoid and biceps as Nutter had. So says I, at once, be that body whose it may, 'tis none of Charles Nutter's, and to that I swear, gentlemen; and I had hardly made an end when 'twas identified for the corpse of the French hair-dresser, newly arrived from Paris, who was crossing the Liffey, on Tuesday night, you remember, at the old ferry-boat slip, and fell in and was drowned. So that part of the story's ended.

"But, gentlemen," continued Toole, with the

important and resolute bearing of a man who has a startling announcement to make, "I am sorry to have to tell you that poor Charles Nutter's in gaol."

In gaol! was echoed in all sorts of tones from his auditory, with an abundance of profane ejaculations of wonderment, concern, and horror.

"Ay, gentlemen, in the body of the gaol."

Then it came out that Nutter had been arrested that very morning, in a sedan-chair, at the end of Cook-street, and was now in the county prison awaiting his trial; and that, no doubt, bail would be refused, which, indeed, turned out truly.

So, when all these amazing events had been thoroughly discussed, the little gathering dispersed to blaze them abroad, and Toole wrote to Mr. Gamble, to tell him that "the person, M. M., Mary Matchwell, claiming to be the wife of Charles Nutter, has established herself at the Mills, and is disposed to be troublesome, and terrifies poor Mrs. Sally Nutter, who is ill; it would be a charity to come out, and direct measures. I know not what ought to be done, though confident her claim is a bag of moonshine and lies, and, if not stopped, she'll make away with the goods and furniture, which is mighty hard upon this unfortunate lady," etc, etc.

"That Mary Matchwell, as I think, ought to be in gaol for the assault on Sturk; her card, you know, was found in the mud beside him, and she's fit for any devil's work."

This was addressed by Toole to his good wife.

"That *card?*" said Jimmey, who happened to be triturating a powder in the corner for little Master Barney Sturk, and who suspended operations, and spoke with the pestle in his fingers, and a very cunning leer on his sharp features; "I know all about that card."

"You do—do you? and why didn't you spake out long ago, you vagabond?" said Toole. "Well, then! come now!—what's in your knowledge-box?—out with it."

"Why, I had that card in my hand the night Mr. Nutter went off."

"Well?—go on."

"'Twas in the hall at the Mills, sir; I knew it again at the Barracks the minute I seen it."

"Why, 'tis a printed card—there's hundreds of them—how d'ye know one from t'other, wisehead?"

"Why, sir, 'twas how this one was walked on, and the letter M. in Mary was tore across, an' on the back was writ, in red ink, for Mrs. Macnamara, and they could not read it down at the Barracks, because the wet had got at it, and the end was mostly washed away, and they thought it was MacNally, or MacIntire; but I knew it the minute I seen it."

"Well, my tight little fellow, and what the dickens has all that to do with the matter?" asked Toole, growing uneasy.

"The dickens a much, I believe, sir; only as

Mr. Nutter was goin' out he snatched it out o' my hand—in the hall there—and stuffed it into his pocket."

"You did not tell that cursed lying story, did you? about the town, you mischievous young spalpeen," demanded the Doctor, shaking his disciple rather roughly by the arm.

"No—I—I didn't—I did not tell, sir—what is it to me?" answered the boy, frightened.

"You didn't tell—not you, truly. I lay you a tenpenny-bit there is'nt a tattler in the town but has the story by rote—a pretty kettle o' fish you'll make of it, with your meddling and lying. If 'twas true, 'twould be another matter, but—hold your tongue!—how the plague are you to know one card from another when they're all alike, and Mrs. Macnamara, Mrs. Macfiddle. I suppose *you* can read better than the *adjutant*, ha, ha! Well, mind my words, you've got yourself into a pretty predicament; I'd walk twice from this to the county court-house and back again, only to look at it; a pleasant cross-hackling the counsellors will give you, and if you prevaricate—you know what that is, my boy—the judge will make short work with you, and you may cool your heels in gaol as long as he pleases, for me."

"And, look'ee," said Toole, returning, for he was going out, as he generally did, whenever he was profoundly ruffled; "you remember the affidavit-man that was whipped and pilloried this

time two years for perjury, eh? Look to it, my fine fellow. There's more than me knows how Mr. Nutter threatened to cane you that night—and a good turn 'twould have been—and 'twouldn't take much to persuade an honest jury that you wanted to pay him off for that by putting a nail in his coffin, you young miscreant! Go on—do—and I promise you'll get an airing yet you'll not like—you will."

And so Toole, with a wag of his head, and a grin over his shoulder, strutted out into the village street, where he was seen, with a pursed mouth and a flushed visage, to make a vicious cut or two with his cane in the air as he walked along. And it must be allowed that Master Jimmey's reflections were rather confused and uncomfortable, as he pondered over the past and the future with the pestle in his fingers and the Doctor's awful words ringing in his ears.

CHAPTER VI.

SHOWING HOW LITTLE LILY'S LIFE BEGAN TO CHANGE INTO A RETROSPECT; AND HOW ON A SUDDEN SHE BEGAN TO FEEL BETTER.

As time wore on, little Lilias was not better. When she had read her Bible, and closed it, she would sit long silent, with a sad look, thinking; and often she would ask old Sally questions about her mother, and listen to her, looking all the time with a strange and earnest gaze through the glass-door upon the evergreens and the early snow-drops. And old Sally was troubled somehow, and saddened at her dwelling so much upon this theme.

And one evening, as they sat together in the drawing-room—she and the good old Rector—she asked him, too, gently, about her; for he never shrank from talking of the beloved dead, but used to speak of her often, with a simple tenderness, as if she were still living.

In this he was right. Why should we be afraid to *speak* of those of whom we think so continually? She is not dead, but sleepeth! I have met a few, and they very good men, who spoke of their beloved dead with this cheery affection, and mingled

their pleasant and loving remembrances of them in their common talk; and often I wished that, when I am laid up in the bosom of our common mother earth, those who loved me would keep my memory thus socially alive, and allow my name when I shall answer to it no more, to mingle still in their affectionate and merry intercourse.

"Some conflicts my darling had the day before her departure," he said; "but such as through God's goodness lasted not long, and ended in the comfort that continued to her end, which was so quiet and so peaceable, we who were nearest about her, knew not the moment of her departure. And little Lily was then but an infant—a tiny little thing. Ah! if my darling had been spared to see her grown-up, such a beauty, and so like her!"

And so he rambled on; and when he looked at her, little Lily was weeping; and as he looked she said, trying to smile—

"Indeed, I don't know why I'm crying, darling. There's nothing the matter with your little Lily—only I can't help crying; and I'm your foolish little Lily, you know."

And this often happened, that he found she was weeping when he looked on her suddenly, and she used to try to smile, and both, then, to cry together, and neither say what they feared, only each unspeakably more tender and loving. Ah, yes! in their love was mingling now something of

the yearning of a farewell, which neither would acknowledge.

"Now, while they lay here," says sweet John Bunyan, in his 'Pilgrim's Progress,' "and waited for the good hour, there was a noise in the town that there was a post come from the celestial city, with matter of great importance to one Christiana. So inquiry was made for her, and the house was found out where she was; so the post presented her with a letter, the contents whereof were, 'Hail, thou good one! I bring thee tidings that the Master calleth for thee, and expecteth that thou shouldst stand in his presence, in clothes of immortality, within these ten days.'

"When he had read this letter to her, he gave her therewith a sure token that he was a true messenger, and was come to bid her make haste to be gone. The token was an arrow with a point sharpened with love, let easily into her heart, which by degrees wrought so effectually with her that at the time appointed she must be gone.

"When Christiana saw that her time was come, and that she was the first of this company that was to go over, she called for Mr. Greatheart, her guide, and told him how matters were."

And so little Lily talked with Mr. Greatheart in her own way; and hearing of her mother, gave ear to the story as to a sweet and solemn parable, that lighted her dark steps. And the old man went on:—

"It is St. John who says, 'And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five-and-twenty, or thirty furlongs, they see the Lord walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, 'It is I, be not afraid.' So is it with the frail bark of mortality and the trembling spirit it carries. When 'it is now dark,' and the sea arises, and the 'great wind' blows, the vessel is tost, and the poor heart fails within it; and when they see the dim form which they take to be the angel of death walking the roaring waters, they cry out in terror, but the voice of the sweet Redeemer, the Lord of Life is heard, 'It is I; be not afraid;' and so the faithful ones 'willingly receive him into the ship,' and immediately it is at the land whither they go: yes, at the land whither they go. But, oh! the lonely ones, left behind on the other shore."

One morning, old Sally, who, in her quiet way, used to tell all the little village news she heard, thinking to make her young mistress smile, or at least listen, said—

"And that wild young gentleman, Captain Devereux, is growing godly, they say; Mrs. Irons tells me how he calls for his Bible o' nights, and how he does not play cards, nor eat suppers at the Phœnix, nor keep bad company, nor go into Dublin, but goes to church; and she says she does not know what to make of him."

Little Lily did not speak or raise her head; she went on stirring the little locket, that lay on the table, with the tip of her finger, looking on it silently. She did not seem to mind old Sally's talk, almost to hear it, but when it ended, she waited, still silent, as a child, when the music is over, listens for more.

When she came down, she placed her chair near the window, that she might see the snowdrops and the crocuses.

"The spring, at last, Sally, my darling, and I feel so much better;" and Lily smiled on the flowers through the window, and I fancy the flowers opened in that beautiful light.

And she said, every now and then, that she felt "so much better—so much stronger," and made old Sally sit by her, and talk to her, and smiled so happily, and there again were all her droll engaging little ways. And when the good Rector came in, that evening, she welcomed him in the old pleasant way: though she could not run out, as in other times, when she heard his foot on the steps, to meet him at the door, and there was such a beautiful colour in her clear, thin cheeks, and she sang his favourite little song for him, just one verse, with the clear, rich voice, he loved so well, and then tired. The voice remained in his ears long after, and often came again, and that little song, in lonely reveries, while he sat listening, in long silence, and twilight, a swan's song.

"You see, your little Lily is growing quite well again. I feel so much better!"

There was such a [illegible] in [illegible] his trembling heart [illegible]

"Oh [illegible] little Lily [illegible] darling [illegible] in [illegible] smiling at [illegible] the little [illegible] and [illegible] a little [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

is delighted with his creatures' appreciation of his affection and his trustworthiness; who knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but dust, and is our faithful Creator. Therefore, friend, though thou fearest a shadow, thy prayer is not wasted; though thou rejoicest in an illusion, thy thanksgiving is not in vain. They are the expressions of thy faith recorded in heaven, and counted—oh! marvellous love and compassion!—to thee for righteousness.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH TWO ACQUAINTANCES BECOME, ON A SUDDEN, MARVELLOUS FRIENDLY IN THE CHURCH-YARD; AND MR. DANGERFIELD SMOKES A PIPE IN THE BRASS CASTLE, AND RESOLVES THAT THE DUMB SHALL SPEAK.

On Sunday, Mervyn, after the good Doctor's sermon and benediction, wishing to make inquiry of the Rector touching the movements of his clerk, whose place was provisionally supplied by a corpulent and unctuous mercenary from Dublin, whose fat presence and panting delivery were in signal contrast with the lank figure and deep cavernous tones of the absent official, loitered in the church-yard to allow time for the congregation to disperse, and the parson to disrobe and emerge.

He was reading an epitaph on an expansive black flag-stone, in the far corner of the church-yard, upon several ancestral members of the family of Lowe, who slept beneath "in hope," as the stone-cutter informed the upper world; and musing, as sad men will, upon the dates and vanities of the record, when a thin white hand was lightly laid upon his sleeve from behind; and looking round, in expectation of seeing the Rec-

tor's grave, simple, kindly countenance, he beheld, instead, with a sort of odd thrill, the white glittering face of Mr. Paul Dangerfield.

"Hamlet in the church-yard!" said the white gentleman, with an ambiguous playfulness, very like a sneer. "I'm too old to play Horatio; but standing at his elbow, if the Prince permits, I have a friendly word or two to say, in my own dry way."

"There was in Mervyn's nature something that revolted instinctively from the singular person who stood at his shoulder. Their organizations and appetites were different, I suppose, and repellent. Cold, glittering, stinging, was the "gelidus anguis in herbâ"—the church-yard grass—who had lifted his baleful crest and hissed in his ear.

There was a slight flush on "Hamlet's" forehead, and a glimmer of something dangerous in his eye, as he glanced on his stark acquaintance. But the feeling was transitory and unreasonable, and he greeted him with a cold and sad civility.

"I was thinking, Mr. Mervyn," said Mr. Dangerfield, politely, "of walking up to the Tiled House, after church, to pay my respects, and ask the favour of five minutes' discourse with you; and seeing you here, I ventured to present myself."

"If I can do anything to serve Mr. Dangerfield," began Mervyn.

Dangerfield smiled and bowed. He was very

courteous; but in his smile there was a character of superiority which Mervyn felt almost like an insult.

"You mistake me, sir. I'm all gratitude; but I don't mean to trouble you further than to ask your attention for two or three minutes. I've a thing to tell you, sir. I'm really anxious to serve *you*. I wish I could. And 'tis only that I've recollected since I saw you a circumstance of which possibly you may make some use."

"I'm deeply obliged, sir—deeply," said Mervyn, eagerly.

"I'm only, sir, too happy. It relates to Charles Archer. I've recollected, since I saw you, a document concerning his death. It had a legal bearing of some sort, and was signed by, at least, three gentlemen. One was Sir Philip Drayton, of Drayton Hall, who was with him at Florence in his last illness. I may have signed it myself, but I don't recollect. It was by his express desire—to quiet, as I remember, some proceedings which might have made a noise and compromised his family."

"Can you bring to mind the nature of the document?'

"Why, thus much. I'm quite sure it began with a certificate of his death; and then, I think, was added a statement, at his last request, which surprised, or perhaps, shocked us. I only say I *think*—for though I remember that such a state-

ment was solemnly made, I can't bring to mind whether it was set out in the writing of which I speak. Only I am confident it referred to some crime—a confession of something; but for the life o' me I can't recollect what. If you could let me know the subject of your suspicion it might help me. I should never have remembered this occurrence, for instance, had it not been for our meeting t'other day. I can't exactly—in fact, *at all*—bring to mind what the crime was: forgery, or perjury—eh?"

"Why, sir, 'twas this," said Mervyn, and stopped short, not knowing how far even this innocent confidence might compromise Irons. Dangerfield, his head slightly inclined, was disconcertingly silent and attentive.

"I—I suspect," resumed Mervyn. "I suspect, sir, 'twas *perjury*," said Mervyn."

"Oh! perjury? I see—in the matter of his testimony in that distressing prosecution. My Lord Dunoran—hey?"

Mervyn bowed, and Dangerfield remained silently thoughtful for a minute or two, and then said:—

"I see, sir—I *think* I see; but, who then was the guilty man, who killed Mr.—pooh, What's-his-name—the deceased man—you know?"

"Why, upon that point, sir, I should have some hesitation in speaking. I can only now say thus much, that I'm satisfied, he, Charles

Archer, in swearing as he did, committed wilful perjury."

"You are?—oho!—ho! This is satisfactory. You don't, of course, mean mere conjecture—eh?"

"I know not, sir, how you would call it, but 'tis certainly a feeling fixed in my mind."

"Well, sir, I trust it may prove well founded. I wish I had myself a copy of that paper; but, though I have it not, I think I can put you in a way to get it. It was addressed, I perfectly recollect, to the Messrs. Elrington, gentlemen attorneys, in Chancery-lane, London. I remember it, because my Lord Castlemallard employed them eight or nine years afterwards in some law business, which recalled the whole matter to my mind before it had quite faded. No doubt, they have it there. 'Twas about a week after his death The date of that you can have from newspapers. You'll not mention my name when writing, because they mayn't like the trouble of searching, and my Lord Castlemallard would not approve my meddling in other persons' affairs—even in yours."

"I shan't forget. But what if they refuse to seek the paper out."

"Make it worth their while in money, sir; and, though they may grumble over it, I warrant they'll find it."

"Sir," said Mervyn, suddenly, "I cannot thank

you half enough. This statement, should it appear attached, as you suppose, to the certificate, may possibly place me on the track of that lost witness, who yet may restore my ruined name and fortunes. I thank you, sir. From my heart I thank you."

And he grasped Dangerfield's white thin hand in his, with a fervour how unlike his cold greeting of only a few minutes before, and shook it with an eager cordiality.

Thus across the grave of these old Lowes did the two shake hands, as they had never done before; and Dangerfield, white and glittering, and like a frolicsome man, entering into a joke, wrung his with an exaggerated demonstration, and then flung it downward with a sudden jerk, as if throwing down a glove. The gesture, the smile, and the suspicion of a scowl, had a strange mixture of cordiality, banter, and defiance, and he was laughing a quiet "ha, ha, ha;" and, wagging his head, he said—

"Well, I thought 'twould please you to hear this; and anything more I can do or think of is equally at your service."

So, side by side they returned, picking their steps among the graves and headstones, to the old church porch.

For a day or two after the storm, the temper of our cynical friend of the silver spectacles had suffered. Perhaps he did not like the news which

had reached him since, and would have preferred that Charles Nutter had made good his escape from the gripe of justice.

The management of Lord Castlemallard's Irish estate had devolved provisionally upon Mr. Dangerfield during the absence of Nutter and the coma of his rival; and the erect white gentleman, before his desk in his elbow-chair, when, after his breakfast, about to open the letters and the books relating to this part of his charge, used sometimes to grin over his work, and jabber to himself his hard scoffs and jibes over the sins and follies of man, and the chops and changes of this mortal life.

But from and after the night of the snow-storm he had contracted a disgust for this part of his labours, and he used to curse Nutter with remarkable intensity, and with an iteration which, to a listener who thought that even the best thing may be said too often, would have been tiresome.

Perhaps a little occurrence, which Mr. Dangerfield himself utterly despised, may have had something to do with his bitter temper, and gave an unsatisfactory turn to his thoughts. It took place on the eventful night of the tempest.

If some people saw visions that night, others dreamed dreams. In a midnight storm like this, time was when the solemn peal and defiant clang of the holy bells would have rung out confusion through the winged hosts of "the prince of the powers of the air," from the heights of the abbey

tower. Everybody has a right to his own opinion upon the matter. Maybe the prince and his army are no more upon the air on such a night than on any other; or that being so, they no more hastened their departure by reason of the bells than the eclipse does in consequence of the beating of the Emperor of China's gongs. But this I aver, whatever the cause, upon such nights of storm, the sensoria of some men are crossed by such wild variety and succession of images, as amounts very nearly to the walpurgis of a fever. It is not the mere noise—other noises won't do it. The air, to be sure, is thin, and blood-vessels expand, and perhaps the brain is pressed upon unduly. Well, I don't know. Material laws may possibly account for it. I can only speak with certainty of the phenomenon. I've experienced it; and some among those of my friends who have reached that serene period of life in which we con over our ailments, register our sensations, and place ourselves upon regimens, tell me the same story of themselves. And this, too, I know, that upon the night in question, Mr. Paul Dangerfield, who was not troubled either with vapours or superstitions, as he lay in his green-curtained bed in the Brass Castle, had as many dreams flitting over his brain and voices humming and buzzing in his ears, as if he had been a poet or a pythoness.

He had not become, like poor Sturk before his catastrophe, a dreamer of dreams habitually. I

suppose he did dream. The beasts do. But his visions never troubled him; and I don't think there was one morning in a year on which he could have remembered his last night's dream at the breakfast-table.

On this particular night, however, he did dream. *Vidit somnium.* He thought that Sturk was dead, and laid out in a sort of state in an open coffin, with a great bouquet on his breast, something in the continental fashion, as he remembered it in the case of a great, stern, burly ecclesiastic in Florence. The coffin stood on tressels in the aisle of Chapelizod church; and, of all persons in the world, he and Charles Nutter stood side by side as chief mourners, each with a great waxen taper burning in one hand, and a white pocket-handkerchief in the other.

Now, in dreams it sometimes happens that men undergo sensations of awe, and even horror, such as waking they never know, and which the scenery and situation of the dream itself appear wholly inadequate to produce. Mr. Paul Dangerfield, had he been called on to do it, would have kept solitary watch in a dead man's chamber, and smoked his pipe as serenely as he would in the club-room of the Phœnix. But here it was different. The company were all hooded and silent, sitting in rows; and there was a dismal sound of distant waters, and an indefinable darkness and horror in the air, and, on a sudden, up sat the

corpse of Sturk, and thundered, with a shriek, a dreadful denunciation, and Dangerfield started up in his bed aghast, and cried—"Charles Archer!"

The storm was bellowing and shrieking outside, and for some time that grim, white gentleman, bolt upright in his shirt, did not know distinctly in what part of the world, or, indeed, in what world he was.

"So," said Mr. Dangerfield, soliloquizing, "Charles Nutter's alive, and in prison, and what comes next? 'Tis enough to make one believe in a devil almost! Why wasn't he drowned, d——n him? How did he get himself taken, d——n him again? From the time I came into this unlucky village I've smelt danger. That accursed beast, a corpse, and a ghost, and a prisoner at last—well, he has been my evil genius. *If* he were drowned or hanged; born to be hanged, I hope: all *I* want is quiet—just *quiet;* but I've a feeling the play's not played out yet. He'll give the hangman the slip, will he; not if I can help it, though; but caution, sir, caution; life's at stake—my life's on the cast. The clerk's a wise dog to get out of the way. Death's walking. What a cursed fool I was when I came here and saw those beasts, and knew them, not to turn back again, and leave them to possess their paradise? I think I've lost my caution and common sense under some cursed infatuation. That handsome, insolent wench, Miss Gertrude, 'twould be something to have her, and

to humble her, too; but—but 'tis not worth a week in such a neighbourhood."

Now this soliloquy, which broke into an actual mutter every here and there, occurred at about eleven o'clock, A.M., in the little low parlour of the Brass Castle, that looked out on the wintry river.

Mr. Dangerfield knew the virtues of tobacco, so he charged his pipe, and sat grim, white, and erect, by the fire. It is not every one that is "happy thinking," and the knight of the silver spectacles followed out his solitary discourse, with his pipe between his lips, and saw all sorts of things through the white narcotic smoke.

"It would not do to go off and leave affairs thus; a message might follow me, eh? No; I'll stay and see it out, quite out. Sturk—Barnabas Sturk. If he came to his speech for five minutes—hum—we'll see. I'll speak with Mrs. Sturk about it—we must help him to his speech—a prating fellow; 'tis hard he should hold his tongue; yes, we'll help him to his speech; 'tis in the interest of justice—eternal justice—ha, ha, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Let Dr. Sturk be sworn—ha, ha—magna est veritas—there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed; ha, ha. Let Dr. Sturk be called."

So the white, thin phantom of the spectacles and tobacco pipe, sitting upright by the fire, amused himself with a solitary banter. Then

he knocked the white ashes out upon the hob, stood up with his back to the fire, in grim rumination, for about a minute, at the end of which he unlocked his desk, and took forth a letter, with a large red seal. It was more than two months old by this time, and was in fact that letter from the London doctor which he had expected with some impatience.

It was not very long, and standing he read it through, and his white face contracted, and darkened, and grew strangely intense and stern as he did so.

"'Tis devilish strong—ha, ha, ha—conclusive, indeed." He was amused again. "I've kept it long enough—*igni reservata.*"

And holding it in the tongs, he lighted a corner, and as the last black fragment of it, covered with creeping sparks, flew up the chimney, he heard the voice of a gentleman hallooing in the court-yard.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH MR. DANGERFIELD RECEIVES A VISITER, AND MAKES A CALL.

DANGERFIELD walked out and blandly greeted the visiter, who turned out to be Mr. Justice Lowe.

"I give you good morning, sir; pray, alight and step in. Hallo, Doolan, take Mr. Justice Lowe's horse."

So Mr. Lowe thanked him, in his cold way, and bowing, strode into the Brass Castle; and after the customary civilities, he sat himself down, and says he,

"I've been at the Crown Office, sir, about this *murder* we may call it, upon Sturk, and I told them you could throw a light, as I thought, on the matter."

"As how, sir?"

"Why, regarding the kind of feeling that subsisted between the prisoner, Nutter, and Doctor Sturk."

"'Tis unpleasant, sir, but I can't object."

"There was an angry feeling about the agency, I believe? Lord Castlemallard's agency, eh?" continued Lowe.

"Well, I suppose it *was* that; there certainly was an unpleasant feeling—*very* unpleasant."

"You've heard him express it?

"Yes; I think most gentlemen who know him have. Why, he made no disguise of it; he was no great talker, but we've heard him on that subject."

"But you specially know how it stood between them in respect of the agency?"

"Yes."

"Very good, sir," said Lowe.

"And I've a notion that something decisive should be done toward effecting a full discovery, and I'll consider of a method," replied Dangerfield.

"How do you mean?" said Lowe, looking up with a glance like a hawk.

"How! why I'll talk it over with Mrs. Sturk this evening."

"Why, what has she got to tell?"

"Nothing, as I suppose; I'll see her to-day; there's nothing to tell; but something, I think, to be done; it hasn't been set about rightly; 'tis a botched business hitherto—that's in *my* judgment."

"Yet 'tis rather a strong case," answered Mr. Lowe, superciliously.

"Rather a strong case, so it is, but I'll clench it, sir; it ought to be certain."

"Well, sir?" said Lowe, who expected to hear more.

"Yes," said Dangerfield, briskly, "'twill depend on *her*; *I'll* suggest, *she'll* decide."

"And why *she*, sir?" said Lowe, sharply.

"Because 'tis her business and her right, and no one else can," answered Dangerfield just as tartly, with his hands in his breeches' pockets, and his head the least thing o' one side, and then with a bow, "won't you drink a glass of wine, sir?" which was as much as to say, you'll get no more from me.

"I thank you, sir, no; 'tis a little too early for me." And so with the usual ceremonies, Mr. Lowe departed, the governor of the Brass Castle walking beside his horse as far as the iron gate, to do him honour; and as he rode away towards Lucan, Mr. Dangerfield followed him with a snowy grin.

Then briskly, after his wont, the knight of the shining spectacles made his natty toilet; and in a few minutes his cocked-hat was seen gliding along the hedge toward Chapelizod.

He glanced up at Sturk's windows, it was a habit now, so soon as he came in sight, but all looked as usual. So he mounted the steps, and asked to see Mrs. Sturk.

"My dear madam," said he, after due courtesies interchanged, "I've but a few minutes; my horse waits yonder at the Phœnix, and I'm away to town. How does your patient to-day?"

"Oh, mighty well—wonderful—that is consi-

dering how cold the weather is. The Doctor says he's lower, indeed, but I don't mind that, for he must be lower while the cold continues; I always say that; and I judge very much by the eye; don't you, Mr. Dangerfield? by his looks, you know; they can't deceive me, and I assure you"——

"Your house is quiet; are the children out, ma'am?"

"Oh, yes, with Mag in the Park."

"Perhaps, ma'am, you'd let me see him?"

"See him?"

"Yes; look on him, ma'am, only for a moment, you know."

She looked very much surprised, and perhaps a little curious and frightened.

"I hope you haven't heard he's worse, Mr. Dangerfield. Oh, sir, sure you haven't?"

"No, madam, on my honour, except from yourself I've heard nothing of him to-day; but I'd like to see him, and speak a word to you, with your permission."

So Mrs. Sturk led the way up-stairs, whispering as she ascended; for she had always the fancy in her head that her Barney was in a sweet light sleep, from which he was on no account to be awakaned, forgetting, or not clearly knowing, that all the ordnance in the barrack-yard over the way had not voice enough to call him up from that dread slumber.

"You may go down, my dear," said Mr. Dangerfield to the little girl, who rose silently from the chair as they entered; "with your permission, Mistress Sturk—I say, child, you may run down," and he smiled a playful, sinister smile, with a little wave of his finger toward the door. So she courtesied and vanished obediently.

Then he drew the curtain, and looked on Doctor Sturk. There lay the hero of the tragedy, his smashed head strapped together with sticking-plaster, and a great white fold of fine, linen, like a fantastic turban, surmounting his grim yellow features.

Then he slipped his fingers under the coverlet and took his hand; a strange greeting that! But it was his pulse he wanted, and when he had felt it for a while—

"Psha!" said he in a whisper—for the semblance of sleep affected every one alike—"his pulse is just gone. Now, madam, listen to me. There's not a soul in Chapelizod but yourself who does not know his wounds are mortal—he's *dying*, ma'am."

"Oh—oh—o—o—oh, Mr. Dangerfield, you don't—you don't think so," wildly cried the poor little lady, growing quite white with terror and agony.

"Now, pray, my dear Mistress Sturk, compose yourself, and hear me out: "'Tis my belief he has a chance, but none, absolutely *no* chance, madam,

unless my advice be taken. There's not an evening, ma'am, I meet Doctor Toole at the club, but I hear the same report—a little lower—always the same—lower—sinking—and *no hope.*"

Here Mrs. Sturk broke out again.

"Now, madam, I protest you'll make me regret my visit, unless you please to command yourself. While the Doctors who are about him have got him in hands, there's neither hope for his life, nor for his recovering, for one moment, the use of his speech. Pray, madam, hear me. They state as much themselves. Now, madam, I say we must have a chance for his life, and if that fails, a chance for his speech. The latter, madam, is of more consequence than, perhaps, you are aware."

Poor little Mrs. Sturk was looking very pale, and breathing very hard, with her hand pressed to her heart.

"I've done what I could, you know, to see my way through his affairs, and I've succeeded in keeping his creditors quiet."

At this point poor Mrs. Sturk broke out—

"Oh! may the Father of the fatherless, if such they are to be, bless and reward—oh—oh, ho—ho, Mr. Dangerfield—oh—oh—oh—sir."

"Now, pray madam, oblige me and be tranquil. I say, madam, his affairs, I suspect, are by no means in so bad a case as we at first supposed, and he has got, or I'm mistaken, large sums out, but where, neither I nor you can tell. Give him five

minutes' speech, and it may be worth a thousand pounds to you—well, not to you, if you will, but to his children. And again, madam, 'tis of the utmost importance that he should be able to state who was the villain who struck him—Charles—a—Charles—Mr. Nutter—you know, madam."

"Oh! that dreadful—dreadful man—may heaven forgive him. Oh, my Barney! look at him there—he'd forgive him if he could speak. You would, my blessed Barney—you would."

"To be sure he would. But see, ma'am, the importance of having his evidence to settle the fact. Well, I know that he would not like to hang anybody. But suppose, ma'am, Charles Nutter is innocent, don't you think he'd like to acquit him; ay, you do. Well, ma'am, 'tis due to the public, you see, and to his children that he should have a chance of recovering his speech, and to common humanity that he should have a chance for his *life*, eh? and *neither* will the doctors who have him in hands allow him. Now, madam, there's a simple operation, called trepanning, you have heard of it, which would afford him such a chance, but fearing its failure they won't try it, although they allege that without it *he must die*, d'ye see?—ay, *die he must*, without a cast for his life if you won't try it."

And so, by harping on the alternatives, and demonstrating the prudence, humanity, and duty of action, and the inevitably fatal consequences of

the other course, he wrought upon her at last to write a note to Surgeon Dillon to come out on the evening following, and to perform the operation. The dreadful word "to-day," the poor little woman could not abide. She pleaded for a respite, and so, half distracted, fixed to-morrow.

"I hope, my dear madam, you've some little confidence in me. I think I have shown an interest, and I've striven to be of use."

"Oh, sir, Mr. Dangerfield, you've been too good, our guardian angel; but for you, sir, we should not have had a roof over our heads, or a bed to lie on; oh! may"——

"Well, ma'am, you please to speak too highly of my small services; but I would plead them, humble as they are, as a claim on your confidence, and having decided upon this wise and necessary course, pray do not say a word about it to anybody but myself. I will go to town and arrange for the Doctor's visit, and you'll soon, I hope, have real grounds forg ratitude, not to me, ma'am, but to Heaven."

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH MR. PAUL DANGERFIELD PAYS HIS RESPECTS AND COMPLIMENTS AT BELMONT; WHERE OTHER VISITERS, ALSO, PRESENT THEMSELVES.

BEFORE going to town, Mr. Dangerfield, riding over the bridge and up the Palmerstown-road, dismounted at Belmont door-steps, and asked for the General. He was out. Then for Miss Rebecca Chattesworth. Yes, she was in the withdrawing-room. And so, light, white, and wiry, he ascended the stairs swiftly.

"Mr. Dangerfield," cried Dominick, throwing open the door; and that elderly and ill-starred wooer glided in thereat.

"Madam, your most humble servant."

"Oh! Mr. Dangerfield? You're very welcome, sir," said Aunt Becky, with a grand courtesy, and extending her thin jewelled hand, which he took gallantly, with another bow, and a smile, and a flash from his spectacles.

Aunt Becky laid down her volume of Richardson. She was quite alone, except for her little monkey—Goblin—with a silver hoop about his waist, and a chain thereto attached; two King Charles' dogs, whose barking subsided after a

while; and one green parrot on a perch in the bow-window, who happily was not in a very chatty mood just then. So the human animals were able to edge in a sentence easily enough. And Mr. Dangerfield said—

"I'm happy in having found you, madam; for whatever be my disappointments elsewhere, to Miss Rebecca Chattesworth at least I owe a debt of gratitude, which, despairing to repay it, I can only acknowledge; and leaving unacknowledged, I should have departed from Ireland most unhappily."

"What a fop! what a fop," said the parrot.

"You rate my poor wishes too highly, Mr. Dangerfield. I over-estimated, myself, my influence with the young lady; but why speak of your departure, sir, so soon? A little time may yet work a change."

"You lie, you dog; you lie, you lie, you lie," said the parrot.

"Madam," said he, with a shake of his head, "'tis hoping against hope. Time will add to *my* wrinkles without softening *her* aversion. I utterly despair. While there remained one spark of hope I should never have dreamed of leaving Chapelizod."

Here there was a considerable pause, during which the parrot occasionaly, repeated "You lie, you lie—you dog—you lie."

"Of course, sir, if the chance be not worth

waiting for, you do well to be gone wherever your business or your pleasures, sir, invite you," said Aunt Becky, a little loftily.

"What a fop!" said the parrot. "You lie, you dog!"

"Neither business, madam, nor pleasures invite me. My situation here has been most distressing. So long as hope cheered me, I little regarded what might be said or thought; but I tell you honestly that hope is extinguished; and it has grown to me intolerable longer to remain in sight of that treasure for which I cannot cease to wish, and which I never can possess. I've grown, madam, to detest the place."

Aunt Becky, with her head very high, adjusted in silence the two China mandarins on the mantel-piece—first, one very carefully, then the other. And there was a pause, during which one of the lap-dogs screamed; and the monkey, who had boxed its ears, jumped, with a ringing of his chain chattering, on the back of the arm-chair in which the grim suitor sat. Mr. Dangerfield would have given the brute a slap in the face, but that he knew how that would affect Miss Rebecca Chattesworth.

"So, madam," said he, standing up abruptly, "I am here to thank you most gratefully for the countenance given to my poor suit, which, here and now, at last and for ever, I forego. I shall leave for England so soon as my business will allow; and as I made no secret of my suit, so I

shall make none of the reasons of my departure. I'm an outspoken man, madam; and as the world knew my hopes, I shall offer them no false excuses for my departure; but lift my hat, and bow to fortune—a defeated man."

"*Avez-vous dine mon petit coquin?*" said the parrot.

"Well, sir, I will not altogether deny you have reason for what you design; and, it may be, 'tis as well to bring the matter to a close, though your resolution has taken me by surprise. She hath shown herself so perverse in this respect, that I allow I see no present likelihood of a change; and indeed I do not quite understand my niece; and, very like, she does not comprehend herself."

Mr. Dangerfield almost smiled one of his grim disconcerting smiles, and a cynical light played over his face; and the black monkey behind him grinned and hugged himself like his familiar. The disappointed gentleman thought he understood Miss Gertrude pretty well.

"I thought," said Aunt Becky; "I suspected—did you—a certain young gentleman in this neighbourhood"—

"As having found his way to the young lady's good graces?" asked Dangerfield.

"Yes; and I conjecture you know whom I mean," said Aunt Rebecca.

"Who—pray, madam?" he demanded.

"Why, Lieutenant Puddock," said Aunt Becky,

again adjusting the china, on the chimney-piece.

"Eh?—truly?—that did not strike me," replied Dangerfield.

He had a disconcerting way of saying the most ordinary things, and there was a sort of latent meaning, like a half-heard echo, underrunning the surface of his talk, which sometimes made people undefinably uncomfortable; and Aunt Becky looked a little stately and flushed; but in a minute more the conversation proceeded.

"I have many regrets, Miss Chattesworth, in leaving this place. The loss of your society—don't mistake me, I never flatter—is a chief one Some of your views and plans interested me much. I shall see my Lord Castlemallard sooner than I should had my wishes prospered; and I will do all in my power to engage him to give the site for the building, and stones from the quarry free; and I hope, though no longer a resident here, you will permit me to contribute fifty pounds towards the undertaking."

"Sir, I wish there were more gentlemen of your public spirit and Christian benevolence," cried Aunt Becky, very cordially; "and I have heard of all your goodness to that unhappy family of Doctor Sturk's—poor wretched man!"

"A bagatelle, madam," said Dangerfield, shaking his head and waving his hand slightly; "but I hope to do them, or at least the public, a service

of some importance, by bringing conviction home to the assassin who struck him down, and that in terms so clear and authentic, as will leave no room for doubt in the minds of any; and to this end I'm resolved to stick at no trifling sacrifice, and, rather than fail, I'll drain my purse."

"Mon petit coquin!" prattled the parrot in the bow-window.

"And, madam," said he, after he had risen to take his leave, "as I before said, I'm a plain man. I mean, so soon as I can wind my business up, to leave this place and country—I would *to-night*, if I could; but less, I fear, than some days—perhaps a week—will not suffice. When I'm gone, madam, I beg you'll exercise no reserve repecting the cause of my somewhat abrupt departure. I could easily make a pretext of something else; but the truth, madam, is easiest as well as best to be told, I protracted my stay so long as hope continued. Now my suit is ended. I can no longer endure the place. The remembrance of your kindness only, sweetens the bitterness of my regret, and that I shall bear with me so long, madam, as life remains."

And saying this, as Mr. Richardson writes, "he bowed upon her passive hand," and Miss Rebecca made him a grand and gracious courtesy.

As he retreated, whom should Dominick announce but "Captain Cluffe and Lieutenant Puddock." And there was an odd smile on Mr.

Dangerfield's visage, as he slightly acknowledged them in passing, which Aunt Rebecca somehow did not like.

So Aunt Becky's levee went on; and as Homer, in our school-boy ear, sang the mournful truth, that "as are the generations of the forest leaves so are the successions of men," the Dangerfield efflorescence had no sooner disappeared, and that dry leaf whisked away down the stairs, than Cluffe and Puddock budded forth and bloomed in his place, in the sunshine of Aunt Rebecca's splendid presence.

Cluffe, in virtue of his rank and pretensions, marched in the van, and, as Aunt Becky received him, little Puddock's round eyes swept the room, in search, perhaps, of some absent object.

"The General's not here," said Aunt Becky, loftily and severely, interpreting Puddock's wandering glance in that way. "Your visit, perhaps, is for him—you'll find him in his study, with the orderly."

"My visit, madam," said Puddock, with a slight blush, "was intended for you, madam—not for the General, whom I had the honour of seeing this morning on parade."

"Oh! for me? I thank you," said Aunt Rebecca, with a rather dry acknowledgment. And so she turned and chatted with Cluffe, who, not being at liberty to talk upon his usual theme—his poor, unhappy friend, Puddock, and his disgraces—

was eloquent upon the monkey, and sweet upon the lap-dogs, and laughed till he grew purple at the humours of the parrot, and swore, as gentlemen then swore, 'twas a conjuror, a wonder, and as good as a play. While this entertaining conversation was going on, there came a horrid screech and a long succession of yelps from the coart-yard.

"Good gracious mercy!" cried Aunt Rebecca, sailing rapidly to the window, "tis Flora's voice. Sweet creature, have they killed you—my angel; what is it?—where *are* you, sweetheart?—where *can* she be? Oh, dear—oh, dear!" and she looked this way and that in her distraction.

But the squeak subsided, and Flora was not to be seen; and Aunt Becky's presence of mind returned, and she said—

"Captain Cluffe, 'tis a great liberty; but you're humane—and, besides, I know that *you* would readily do me a kindness." That emphasis was shot at poor Puddock. "And may I pray you to try on the steps if you can see the dear animal anywhere—you know Flora?"

"Know her?—oh dear, yes," cried Cluffe, with alacrity, who, however, did *not*, but relied on her answering to her name, which he bawled lustily from the door-steps and about the court-yard, with many terms of endearment, intended for, Aunt Becky's ear, in the drawing-room.

Little Puddock, who was hurt at that lady's continued severity, was desirous of speaking; for

he liked Aunt Becky, and his heart swelled within him at her injustice; but, though he hemmed once or twice, somehow the exordium was not ready, and his feelings could not find a tongue.

Aunt Becky looked steadfastly from the window for a while, and then sailed majestically toward the door, which the little Ensign, with an humble and somewhat frightened countenance, hastened to open.

"Pray, sir, don't let me trouble you," said Aunt Becky, in her high, cold way.

"Madam, 'tis no trouble—it would be a happiness to me, madam, to serve you in any way you would permit; but *'tis* a trouble to me, madam, indeed, that you leave the room, and a greater trouble," said little Puddock, waxing fluent as he proceeded, "that I have incurred your displeasure—indeed, madam, I know not how—your goodness to me, madam, in my sickness, I never can forget."

"You *can* forget, sir—you *have* forgot. Though, indeed, sir, there was little to remember, I—I'm glad you thought me kind, sir. I—I wish you well, sir," said Aunt Becky. She was looking down and a little pale, and in her accents something hurried and almost sad. "And as for my displeasure, sir, who said I was displeased? And if I were, what could my displeasure be to you? No, sir," she went on almost fiercely, and with a little stamp on the floor, "you don't care; and

why should you?—you've proved it—you don't, Lieutenant Puddock, and you *never* did."

And, without waiting for an answer, Aunt Becky flashed out of the room, and up-stairs to her chamber, the door of which she slammed fiercely; and Gertrude, who was writing a letter in her own chamber, heard her turn the key hastily in the lock.

When Cluffe, who for some time continued to exercise his lungs in persuasive invitations to Flora, at last gave over the pursuit, and returned to the drawing-room, to suggest that the goddess in question had probably retreated to the kitchen, he was a good deal chagrined to find the drawing-room "untreasured of its mistress."

Puddock looked a good deal put out, and his explanation was none of the clearest; and he could not at all say that the lady was coming back.

"I think, Lieutenant Puddock," said Cluffe, who was much displeased, and had come to regard Aunt Rebecca very much as under his special protection, "it might have been better we hadn't called here. I—you see—you're not—you see it yourself—you've offended Miss Rebecca Chattesworth somehow, and I'm afraid you've not mended matters while I was down stairs bawling after that cursed—that—the—little dog, you know. And—and for my part, I'm devilish sorry I came, sir."

This was said after a wait of nearly ten minutes, which appeared at least twice as long.

"I'm sorry, sir, I embarrassed you with the disadvantage of my company," answered little Puddock, with dignity.

"Why, 'tisn't that, you know," rejoined Cluffe, in a patronizing "my-good-fellow" sort of way; "you know I always liked your company devilish well. But where's the good of putting one's self in the way of being thought *de trop*—don't you see—by other people—and annoyed in this way—and—you—you don't know the *world*, Puddock—you'd much better leave yourself in my hands, d'ye see; and so, I suppose, we may as well be off now—'tis no use waiting longer."

And discontentedly and lingeringly the gallant Captain, followed by Puddock, withdrew himself—pausing to caress the wolf-dog at the corner of the court-yard, and loitering as long as was decent in the avenue.

All this time Miss Gertrude Chattesworth, like her more mature relative, was in the quiet precincts of her chamber. She, too, had locked her door, and, with throbbing temples and pale face, was writing a letter, from which I take the liberty of printing a few scarcely coherent passages.

"I saw you on Sunday—for near two hours—may Heaven forgive me, thinking of little else than you. And, oh! what would I not have

given to speak, were it but ten words, to you? When is my miserable probation to end? Why is this perverse mystery persisted in? I sometimes lose all hope in my destiny, and well-nigh all trust in you. I feel that I am a deceiver, and cannot bear it. I assure you, on my sacred honour, I believe there is nothing gained by all this—oh! forgive the word—deception. How or when is it to terminate?—what do you purpose?—why does the clerk's absence from the town cause you so much uneasiness?—is there any danger you have not disclosed? A friend told me that you were making preparations to leave Chapelizod, and return to England. I think I was on the point of fainting when I heard it. I almost regret I did not, as the secret would thus have been discovered, and my emancipation accomplished. How have you acquired this strange influence over me, to make me so deceive those in whom I should most naturally confide. I am persuaded they believe I really recoil from you. And what is this new business of Doctor Sturk? I am distracted with uncertainties and fears. I hear so little, and imperfectly, from you, I cannot tell from your dark hints whether some new danger lurks in those unlooked-for-quarters. I know not what magic binds me so to you, to endure the misery of this strange deceitful mystery—but you are all mystery; and yet be not—you cannot be—my evil genius. You will not

condemn me longer to a wretchedness that must destroy me. I conjure you, declare yourself. What have we to fear? I will brave all—anything—rather than darkness, suspense, and the consciousness of a continual dissimulation. Declare yourself, I implore of you, and be my angel of light and deliverance."

There is a vast deal more, but this sample is quite enough; and when the letter was finished, she signed it—

"Your most unhappy and too-faithful,

"GERTRUDE."

And having sealed it, she leaned her anxious head upon her hand, and sighed heavily.

She knew very well by what means to send it; and the letter awaited at his house him for whom it was intended on his return that evening.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH THE KNIGHT OF THE SILVER SPECTACLES MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF THE SAGE "BLACK DILLON," AND CONFERS WITH HIM IN HIS RETREAT.

At that time there had appeared in Dublin an erratic genius in the medical craft, a young surgeon, "Black Dillon," they called him, the glory and disgrace of his calling; such as are from time to time raised up to abuse the pride of intellect, and terrify the dabblers in vice. A prodigious mind, illuminating darkness, and shivering obstacles at a blow, with a vivid and electric force, with the power of a demigod, and the lusts of a swine. Without order, without industry; defying all usages and morality; lost for weeks together in the catacombs of vice; and emerging to re-assert in an hour the supremacy of his intellect; without principles or shame; laden with debt; and shattered and poisoned with his vices; a branded and admired man.

In the presence of this outcast genius and prodigy of vice, stood Mr. Dangerfield. There were two other gentlemen in the same small room, one of whom was doggedly smoking, with his hat on,

over the fire; the other snoring in a crazy arm-chair, on the back of which hung his wig. The window was small and dirty; the air muddy with tobacco-smoke, and inflamed with whiskey. Singing and the clang of glasses was resounding from the next room, together with peals of coarse laughter, and from that on the other side, the high tones and hard swearing, and the emphatic slapping of a heavy hand upon the table, indicating a rising quarrel, were heard. From one door through another, across the narrow floor on which Mr. Dangerfield stood, every now and then lounged, some neglected, dirty, dissipated looking inmate of these unwholesome precincts. In fact, Surgeon Dillon's present residence was in that diversorium pecatorum, the Four Courts Marshalsea in Molesworth-court. As these gentlemen shuffled or swaggered through, they nodded, winked, grunted, or otherwise saluted the medical gentleman, and stared at his visiter. For as the writer of the Harleian tract—I forget its name—pleasantly observes:—"In gaol they are no proud men, but will be quickly acquainted without cere mony."

Mr. Dangerfield stood erect; all his appointments were natty, and his dress, though quiet, rich in material, and there was that air of reserve, and decision, and command about him, which suggests money, an article held much in esteem in that retreat. He had a way of seeing every

thing in a moment without either staring or stealing glances, and nobody suspected him of making a scrutiny. In the young surgeon he saw an object in strong contrast with himself. He was lean and ungainly, shy and savage, dressed in a long greasy silk morning gown, blotched with wine and punch over the breast. He wore his own black hair gathered into a knot behind, and in a neglected dusty state, as if it had not been disturbed since he rolled out of his bed. This being placed, his large, red, unclean hands, with fingers spread, like a gentleman playing the harpsichord, upon the table, as he stood at the side opposite to Mr. Dangerfield, and he looked with a haggard, surly stare on his visiter, through his great dark, deep-set prominent eyes, streaming fire, the one feature that transfixed the attention of all who saw him. He had a great brutal mouth, and his nose was pimply and inflamed, for Bacchus has his fines as well as Cupid, only he applies them differently. How polished showed Mr. Dangerfield's chin opposed to the three days' beard of Black Dillon? how delicate his features compared with the lurid proboscis, and huge, sensual, sarcastic mouth of the gentleman in the dirty morning-gown and shapeless slippers, who confronted him with his fixed glare, an image of degradation and power?

"Tuppince, Docthor Dillon," said a short, fat, dirty nymph, without stays or hoop, setting down

a "naggin o' whiskey" between the medical man and his visiter.

The Doctor, to do him justice, for a second or two looked confoundedly put out, and his eyes blazed fiercer as his face flushed.

"Three halfpence outside, and twopence here, sir," said he with an awkward grin, throwing the money on the table; "that's the way our shepherd deglubat oves, sir; she's brought it too soon, but no matter."

It was not one o'clock, in fact.

"They *will* make mistakes, sir; but you will not suffer their blunders long, I warrant," said Dangerfield, lightly: "Pray, sir, can we have a room for a moment to ourselves."

"We can, sir, 'tis a liberal house; we can have any thing; liberty itself, sir, for an adequate sum," replied Mr. Dillon.

Whatever the sum was, the room was had, and the surgeon, who had palpably left his "naggin" uneasily in company with the gentleman in the hat and him without a wig, eyed Dangerfield curiously, thinking that possibly his grand-aunt Molloy had left him the fifty guineas she was rumoured to have sewed up in her stays.

"There's a great deal of diversion, sir, in five hundred guineas," said Mr. Dangerfield, and the spectacles flashed pleasantly upon the Doctor.

"Ye may say that," answered the grinning surgeon, with a quiet oath of expectation.

"'Tis a handsome fee, sir, and you may have it."

"Five hundred guineas!"

"Ay you've heard, sir, perhaps, of the attempted murder in the Park, on Doctor Sturk, of the Artillery; for which Mr. Nutter now lies in prison?" said Mr. Dangerfield.

"That I have, sir."

"Well, you shall have the money, sir, if you perform a simple operation."

"'Tis not to hang him you want me?" said the Doctor, with a gloomy sneer.

"Hang him!—ha, ha—no, sir, Doctor Sturk still lives, but insensible. He must be brought to consciousness, and speech. Now, the trepan is the only way to effect it; and I'll be frank with you: Doctor Pell has been with him half-a-dozen times, and he says the operation would be instantaneously fatal. I don't believe him. So also says Sir Hugh Skelton, to whom I wrote in London—I don't believe him, either. At all events, the man is dying, and can't last very many days longer, so there's nothing risked. His wife wishes the operation; here's her note; and I'll give you five hundred guineas and—what are you here for?"

"Only eighteen, unless some more has come in this morning," answered the Doctor.

"And your liberty, sir, *that* on the spot, if you undertake the operation, and the fee so soon as you have done it."

"Can you describe the case, sir, as you stated it to Sir Hugh Skelton?"

"Surely, sir, but I rely for it and the terms, upon the description of a village Doctor, named Toole; an ignoramus, I fear."

And with this preface he concisely repeated the technical description which he had compiled from various club conversations of Dr. Toole's, to which no person imagined he had been listening so closely.

"If that's the case, sir, 'twill kill him."

"Kill or cure, sir, 'tis the only chance," rejoined Dangerfield.

"What sort is the wife, sir?" asked Black Dillon, with a very odd look, while his eye still rested on the short note that poor Mrs. Sturk had penned.

"A nervous little woman of some two or three and forty?" answered the spectacles.

The queer look subsided. He put the note in his pocket, and looked puzzled, and then he asked—

"Is he any way related to you, sir?"

"None in life, sir. But that does not affect, I take it, the medical question."

"No, it does *not* affect the medical question—nothing *can*," observed the surgeon, in a sulky, sardonic way.

"Of course not," answered the oracle of the silver spectacles, and both remained silent for a while.

"You want to have him speak? Well, suppose there's a hundred chances to one the trepan kills him on the spot—what then?" demanded the surgeon, uncomfortably.

Dangerfield pondered also uncomfortably for a minute, but answered nothing; on the contrary, he demanded—

"And what then, sir?"

"But here, in this case," said Black Dillon, "there's no chance at all, do you see, there's *no* chance, good, bad, or indifferent; none at all."

"But *I* believe there *is*," replied Dangerfield, decisively.

"You believe, but *I* know."

"See, sir," said Dangerfield, darkening, and speaking with a strange snarl; "I know what I'm about. I've a desire, sir, that he should speak, if 'twere only two minutes of conscious articulate life, and then death—'tis not a pin's point to me how soon. Left to himself he must die; therefore, to shrink from the operation on which depends the discovery both of his actual murderer and of his money, sir, otherwise lost to his family, is—is a damned affectation! *I* think it—so do *you*, sir; and I offer five hundred guineas as your fee, and Mrs. Sturk's letter to bear you harmless."

Then there was a pause. Dangerfield knew the man's character as well as his skill. There were things said about him darker than we have hinted at.

The surgeon looked very queer and gloomy down upon the table, and scratched his head, and he mumbled gruffly—

"You see—you know—'tis a large fee, to be sure; but then"——

"Come, sir," said Dangerfield, looking as though he'd pull him by the ear; "you should not stick at trifles, when there's—a—a—justice and humanity—and, to be brief, sir—yes or no?"

"Yes," answered the Doctor; "but how's the fee secured?"

"Hey! I'd forgot. Right, sir—you shall be satisfied."

And he took a pen, and wrote on the back of a letter—

"SIR—Considering the hopeless condition in which Dr. Sturk now lies, and the vast importance of restoring him, Dr. Sturk, of the R.I.A., to the power of speech, even for a few minutes, I beg to second Mrs. Sturk's request to you; and when you shall have performed the critical operation she desires I hereby promise, whether it succeed or fail, to give you a fee of five hundred guineas.

"PAUL DANGERFIELD.

"The Brass Castle, Chapelizod."

And he dated it, and handed it to the surgeon, who read it through, and then looked with a gruff hesitation at the writer

"Oh, you've only to inquire—any one who knows Chapelizod will tell you who I am; and you'll want something—eh?—to take you out of this—how much?"

"Only seven guineas. There's a little score here, and some fees. Eighteen will cover everything, unless something has come in this morning."

So they went to "the Hatch," and made inquiries, and all being well, Mr. Dangerfield dealt liberally with the surgeon, who promised to be in attendance at Dr. Sturk's house in Chapelizod, at seven o'clock next evening.

"And pray, Dr. Dillon, come in a coach," said Dangerfield, "and in costume—you understand. They've been accustomed, you know, to see Pell and other Doctors who make a parade."

And with these injunctions they parted; and the surgeon, whose luggage was trifling, jumped into a coach with it, and gingled home to his den and his liberty.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH CHRISTIANA GOES OVER; AND DAN LOFTUS COMES HOME.

THIS evening Lily Walsingham was early tired and very weak, Sally thought, and more glad than usual to lie down in her bed; and there her old and loving nurse fancied that she looked a little strange, and that her thoughts sometimes wandered.

She lay very quietly for a good while, and suddenly, with a beautiful look, and in a clear, glad voice, she said—

"Mother!"

And old Sally said—

"There's no one, dear Miss Lily, but me."

But she was looking earnestly, and, with a wrapt smile, only said—

"Oh!"

She thought she saw her, I believe.

Are these always illusions? Or is it only that, as the twilight deepens, and the shapes of earth melt into night, the stars of heaven, changeless and serene, reveal themselves, and shine out to the darkened eyes of mortals.

As Aunt Becky sat that night in the drawing-

room with her niece, a maid, with a whisper, placed a little note in Miss Gertrude's hand. There was a little pause.

"Oh! aunt—oh!" and she looked so terrified. "Oh! aunt," and she threw her arms round her aunt's neck, and began crying wildly, "Poor Lily's gone—there's the note."

Then arose the wild wailing of unavailing grief, and sobs, mixed with early recollections of childhood, and all poor Lily's sweet traits poured out.

Old Aunt Rebecca took the note. Her stoicism was the point on which she piqued herself most. She looked very pale, and she told her niece to be composed; for Aunt Becky had a theory that feelings ought to be commanded, and that it only needed effort and resolution. So she read the note, holding her head very high, but the muscles of her face were quivering.

"Oh! Gertrude, if ever there was an angel—and the poor desolate old man"——

The theory broke down, and old Aunt Rebecca cried and sat down, and cried heartily, and went and put her thin arms round her niece, and kissed her, and cried, and cried, and kissed her again.

"She was such—such a darling—oh! Gertrude dear, we must never quarrel any more."

Death had come so near, and all things less than itself were rebuked in that sublime presence; and Lily Walsingham was gone; and she who was so

lately their gay companion, all at once so awfully angelic in the unearthly light of death.

"Who'd a' thought it was so near, ma'am," said the maid; "the poor little thing! Though to be sure, ma'am, a winding sheet came three times in the candle last night, and I turns it round and picks it off, that a way, with my nail, unknownst to Mrs. Heany, for fear she'd be frettin' about the little boy that's lyin' at home in the small-pox; and indeed I thought 'twas for him it was; but man proposes, and God disposes—and death forgets none, the Lord be praised—and every one has their hour, old and young, ma'am; and as I was sayin' they had no notion or expectation up at the Elms, ma'am, she was so bad, the heavens be her bed this night. 'Twas all in an instant like, Miss, she made as if she'd sit up, bein' leanin' on pillows—and so she put out them purty little hands of hers, with a smile, and that was all—the purty crature—every one's sorry afther her. The man was cryin' in the hall that brought the note."

The poor came to the door, and made their rude and kindly lamentations—they were all quite sincere—"His Reverence was very good, but he couldn't have the thought, you know." It was quite true—"every one was sorry." The brave Magnolia's eyes were red, when she looked out of the window next morning, and jolly little Doctor Toole said at the Club—

"Ah, sir, she was a bright little thing—a born

lady—such a beauty—and the best little creature. The town might well be proud of her, in every way, sir." And he fell a blubbering; and old Major O'Neill, who was a quiet and silent officer, cried in a reserved way, looking into the fire, with his elbow on the mantelpiece. And Toole said, "I don't know how I'll pass that house."

And many felt the same. Little Lily was there no more—and the Elms were changed—the light and the grace were gone—and they were only dark old trees now.

And every one felt a great desire to find some way—any way—to show their respect and affection for their good old Rector. And I'm sure he understood it—for liking and reverence one way or another will tell their story. The hushed inquiries at the door, and little offers of useless services made by stealth through the servants, and such like foolish kindnesses, at such a time—the evidence of a great but helpless sympathy—are sweet as angelic music.

And who should arrive at night, with all his trunks, or at least a considerable number of them, and his books and rattle-traps, but honest, simple, Dan Loftus. The news was true about his young charge. He had died of fever at Malaga, and Dick Devereux was at last a step—and a long one—nearer to the title. So Dan was back again in his old garret. Travel had not educated him in the world's ways. In them he was the same

queer, helpless tyro. And his costume, though he had a few handsome articles—for, travelling with a sprig of nobility, he thought it but right and seemed to dress accordingly—was on that account, perhaps, only more grotesque than ever. But he had acquired mountains of that lore in which he and good Doctor Walsingham delighted. He had transcribed old epitaphs and translated interminable extracts from archives, and bought five Irish manuscripts, all highly illustrative of that history on which he and the Doctor were so pleasantly engaged. It was too late that night to go up to the Elms; but he longed to unpack his trunkful of manuscripts, and to expound to his beloved Doctor the treasures he had amassed.

But over his solitary tea-cup and his book the sorrowful news from the Elms reached him, and all his historical castles in the air were shivered. In the morning, before the town was stirring, he crossed the bridge, and knocked softly at the familiar hall-door. Honest old John Tracy opened it, and Dan shook hands with him, and both cried for a while quietly.

"How is the honoured master?" at last said Loftus.

"He's there in the study, sir. Thank God, you're come, sir. I'm sure he'd like to see you—I'll ask him."

Dan went into the drawing-room. He looked out at the flowers, and then at the harpsichord,

and on her little walnut table, where her work-basket lay, and her thimble, and the little coral necklace—a childish treasure that she used to wear when she was quite a little thing. It was like a dream; and every thing seemed to say—"poor little Lily!"

So old John came in, and "sir," said he, "the master will be glad to see you." And Dan Loftus found himself in the study; and the good Doctor and he wrung one another's hands for a long time.

"Oh, Dan—Dan—she's gone—little Lily."

"You'll see her again, sir—oh, you'll see her again."

"Oh, Dan! Dan! Till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. Oh, Dan, a day's so long—how am I to get over the time?"

"The loving Lord, sir, will find a way."

"But, oh! was there no pitying angel to stay the blow—to plead for a few years more of life? I deserved it—oh, Dan, yes!—I know it—I deserved it. But, oh! could not the avenger have pierced me, without smiting my innocent darling?"

"Oh! she was taken in love, not in judgment, sir—my pastor—but in love. It was the voice of the Redeemer that called her."

And honest Dan repeated, through his sobs, a verse of that "Song of Songs," which little Lily had loved so well—

"My well-beloved spake, and said unto me: arise, my love, my fair one, and come thy way."

The old man bowed his sorrowful head listening.

"You never saw anything so beautiful," said he, after a while. "I think, Dan, I could look at her for ever. I don't think it was partiality, but it seems to me there never was—I never saw a creature like her."

"Oh, noble! noble!" sobbed poor Dan.

The Doctor took him by the arm, and so into the solemn room.

"I think you'd like to see her, Dan?"

"I would—I would, indeed, sir."

And there was little Lily, never so like the lily before. Poor old Sally had laid early spring flowers on the white coverlet. A snowdrop lay by her pale little finger and thumb, just like a flower that has fallen from a child's hand in its sleep. He looked at her—the white angelic apparition—a smile, or a light, upon the face.

"Oh, my darling, my young darling, gone—'He is not a man as I am, that I should answer him.'"

And poor Dan, loudly crying, repeated the noble words of Paul, that have spoken down to us through the sorrows of nigh two thousand years—

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall

descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

And so there was a little pause, and the old man said—

"It was very good of you to come to me, my good young friend, in my helplessness and shipwreck, for the Lord hath hid himself from me; but he speaks to his desolate creature, my good Dan, through your gracious lips. My faith!—I thought I had faith till it was brought to the test, and then it failed! But my good friend, Loftus, was sent to help me—to strengthen the feeble knees."

And Dan answered, crying bitterly, and clasping the Rector's hand in both of his—

"Oh, my master, all that ever I knew of good, I learned from you, my pastor, my benefactor."

So, with a long, last look, Dan followed the old man to the study, and they talked long there together, and then went out into the lonely garden, and paced its walks side by side, up and down.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN DEVEREUX HEARS THE NEWS; AND MR. DANGERFIELD MEETS AN OLD FRIEND AFTER DINNER.

On the night when this great sorrow visited the Elms, Captain Richard Devereux, who had heard nothing of it, was strangely saddened and disturbed in mind. They say that a distant death is sometimes felt like the shadow and chill of a passing iceberg; and if this ominous feeling crosses a mind already saddened and embittered, it overcasts it with a feeling akin to despair.

Mrs Irons knocked at his door, and with the eagerness of a messenger of news, opened it without awaiting his answer.

"Oh, Captain, jewel, do you know what? There's poor Miss Lily Walsingham; and what do you think but she's dead—the poor little thing; gone to-night, sir—not half an hour ago."

He staggered a little, and put his hand toward his sword, like a man struck by a robber, and looked at her with a blank stare. She thought he was out of his mind, and was frightened.

"'Tis only me, sir, Mrs. Irons."

"A—thank you;" and he walked towards the chimney, and then towards the door, like a man

looking for something; and on a sudden clasping his forehead in his hands, he cried a wild and terrible appeal to the Maker and Judge of all things.

"'Tis impossible—oh, no—oh, no—it's *not* true."

He was in the open air, he could not tell how, and across the bridge, and before the Elms—a dream—the dark Elms—dark everything.

"Oh, no—it can't be—oh, no—oh, no;" and he went on saying as he stared on the old house, dark against the sky; "Oh, no—oh, no."

Two or three times he would have gone over to the hall-door to make inquiry, but he sickened at the thought. He clung to that hope, which was yet not a hope, and he turned and walked quickly down the river's side by the Inchicore-road. But the anguish of suspense soon drew him back again; and now his speech was changed, and he said—

"Yes, she's gone—she's gone—oh, she's gone—she's certainly gone."

He found himself at the drawing-room window that looked into the little garden at the front of the house, and tapping at the window-pane. He remembered, all on a sudden—it was like waking—how strange was such a summons. A little after he saw a light crossing the hall, and he rang the door-bell. John Tracy opened the door. Yes, it was all true

The Captain was looking very pale, John

thought, but otherwise much as usual. He stared at the old servant for some seconds after he told him all, but said nothing, not even good-night, and turned away. Old John was crying; but he called after the Captain to take care of the step at the gate: and as he shut the hall-door his eye caught, by the light of his candle, a scribbling in red chalk, on the white door-post, and he stooped to read it, and muttered, "Them mischevious young blackguards!" and began rubbing at it with the cuff of his coat, his cheek still wet with tears. For even our grief is volatile; or, rather, it is two tunes that are in our ears together, the requiem of the organ, and, with it, the faint hurdy-gurdy jig of our vulgar daily life; and now and then this latter uppermost.

It was not till he had got nearly across the bridge, that Captain Devereux, as it were, waked up. It was no good waking. He broke forth into sheer fury. It is not my business to note down the horrors of this impious frenzy. It was near five o'clock when he came back to his lodgings; and then, not to rest. To sit down, to rise again, to walk round the room and round, and stop on a sudden at the window, leaning his elbows on the sash, with hands clenched together, and teeth set; and so those demoniac hours of night and solitude wore slowly away, and the cold gray stole over the east, and Devereux drank a deep draught of his fiery Lethe, and cast himself down

on his bed, and fell at once into a deep, exhausted lethargy.

When his servant came to his bed-side at seven o'clock, he was lying motionless, with flushed cheeks, and he could not rouse him. Perhaps it was well, and saved him from brain-fever, or madness.

But after such paroxysms, comes often a reaction, a still, stony, awful despondency. It is only the oscillation between active and passive despair. Poor Leonora, after she had worked out her fit, tearing "her raven hair," and reviling heaven, was visited in sadder and tenderer guise by the vision of the past; but with that phantom went down in fear and isolation to the grave.

This morning several of the neighbours went into Dublin, for the bills were to be presented against Charles Nutter for a murderous assault, with intent to kill, made upon the person of Barnabas Sturk, Esq., Doctor of Medicine, and Surgeon of the Royal Irish Artillery. As the day wore on, the honest gossips of Chapelizod looked out anxiously for news. And every body who met any one else asked him—"Any news about Nutter, eh?"—and then they would stop to speculate—and then one would wonder that Dr. Walsingham's man, Clinton, had not yet returned—and the other would look at his watch and say 'twas one o' clock—and then both agreed that Spaight, at all events, must soon come—for

he has appointed two o'clock for looking at that brood mare of Fagan's.

At last, sure enough, Spaight appeared. Toole, who had been detained by business in another quarter, had ridden into the town from Leixlip, and was now dismounted and talking with Major O'Neill upon the absorbing topic. These cronies saw Spaight at the turnpike, and as he showed his ticket, he talked with the man. Of course, the news was come. The turnpike-man knew it by this time; and off scampered Toole, and the Major followed close at his heels, at double-quick. He made a dismal shake or two of his head, and lifted his hand as they drew near. Toole's heart misgave him.

"Well, how is it?—what's the news?" he panted.

"A true bill," answered Spaight, with a solemn stare; "a true bill, sir."

Toole uttered an oath of consternation, and, taking the words out of Spaight's mouth, told the news to the Major.

"Do you tell me so?" exclaimed the Major. "Bedad, sir, I'm uncommon sorry."

"A bad business, sir," observed Spaight.

"No worse," said Toole. "If they convict him on this, you know—in case Sturk dies, and die he will—they'll indict, and convict him on the more *serious* charge," and he winked gloomily, "the evidence is all one."

"That poor little Sally Nutter!" ejaculated the Major. "She's to be pitied, the crature!"

"'Tis mighty slender evidence to take a man's life on," said Toole, with some disgust. "Be the law, sir, the whole thing gives me a complete turn Are you to dine with Colonel Strafford to-day?"

"I am, sir," said the Major; "an' it goes again the Colonel's grain to have a party at all just now, with the respect he has for the family up there," and he nodded, pensively, toward the Elms. "But he asked Lowe ten days ago, and Mr. Dangerfield, and two or three more; and, you know, he could not put them off on that ground—there being no relationship, you see—and, pon my oath, sir, I'd rather not go myself, just now."

That evening, at five o'clock, Colonel Strafford's dinner party assembled at the King's House. The Colonel was a serene man, and hospitality—even had he been in the dumps—demands her sacrifices. He, therefore, did the honours as beseemed a genial and courteous old officer of the Royal Irish Artillery, who, if his conversation was not very remarkable in quality, and certainly not exhorbitant in quantity, made up by listening a great deal, and supplying no end of civility, and an affluence of very pretty claret. Mr. Justice Lowe was there, and Mr. Dangerfield, and old Colonel Bligh, of the Magazine, and honest Major O'Neill, notwithstanding his low spirits. Perhaps they

required keeping up; and claret like Colonel Strafford's is consoling.

The talk turned, of course, a good deal on Charles Nutter; and Mr. Dangerfield, who was in great force, and, indeed, in particularly pleasant spirits, except when unfortunate Nutter was actually under discussion—when he grew grave and properly saddened—told, in his clear, biting way, a curious rosary of Newgate stories—of highwaymen's disguises—of clever constables—of circumstantial evidence marvellously elicited, and exquisitely put together—of monsters, long concealed, drawn from the deep by the finest tackle, into upper light, and dropped deftly into the landing-net of Justice. These curious anecdotes of Bow-street dexterity and Bagshot dodges—thrust and parry—mine and counter-mine—ending, for the most part, in the triumph of Bow-street, Justice crowned, and a Tyburn speech—tickled Lowe mightily, who quite enjoyed himself, and laughed more than his friend Colonel Strafford ever remembered to have heard him before, over some of the ingenious strategems described so neatly by Dangerfield, and the gay irony with which he pointed his catastrophes. And Lowe actually, having obtained Colonel Strafford's leave, proposed that gallant officer's health in a bumper, and took occasion to mention their obligations to him for having afforded them the opportunity of enjoying Mr. Danger-

field's sprightly and instructive sallies; and hoped, with all his heart, that the neighbourhood was long to enjoy the advantage and pleasure of his residence among them. And Mr. Dangerfield replied gaily, that all that was needed to make such sweet scenery and charming company as the place commanded absolutely irresistible, was the sense of safety conferred by the presence of such a magistrate as Mr. Lowe, and the convivial inspiration of such wine as their gallant host provided; and that, for his part, being somewhat of an old boy, and having had enough of rambling, nothing would better please him than to spend the residue of his days amidst the lively quietude of their virtuous and hilarious neighbourhood; and some more to the like purpose, which pleased the good company highly, who all agreed that this white gentleman—fluent, easy, and pointed in his delivery,—was a mighty fine speaker, indeed. Though there was a lurking consciousness in each, which none cared to publish, that there was, at times, an indefinable flavour of burlesque and irony in Mr. Dangerfield's compliments, which excited momentary suspicions and qualms, which the speaker waived off, however, easily with his jewelled fingers, and smiled mockingly away.

Lowe was mightily taken with him. There was little warmth or veneration in that hard justice's nature. But Mr. Dangerfield had a way with him that few men with any sort of taste for

the knowledge of evil could resist; and the cold-eyed justice of the peace hung on his words with an attentive rapture, and felt that he was drinking deep and pleasant draughts from the sparkling fountains of knowledge; and was really sorry, and shook him admiringly by the hand, when Dangerfield, who had special business at home, rose up in his brisk way, and flashed a farewell over the company from his spectacles.

"If Mr. Dangerfield really means to stay here, he must apply for the commission of the peace," said Mr. Lowe, so soon as the door shut. "We must put it upon him. I protest I never met a man so fitted by nature and acquirements to make a perfectly useful magistrate. He and I, sir, between us, we'd give a good account of this part of the county; and there's plenty of work, sir, if 'twere only between this and Dublin; and, by George, sir, he's a wonderful diverting fellow, full of anecdote. Wonderful place London, to be sure."

"And a good man, too, in a quiet way," said Colonel Strafford, who could state a fact. "'Tisn't every rich man has the heart to part with his money as he does; he has done many charities here, and especially he has been most bountiful to poor Sturk's family."

"I know that," said Lowe.

"And he sent a fifty pound note by the Major there to poor Sally Nutter o' Monday last; he'll tell you."

And thus it is, as the foul fiend, when he vanishes, leaves a smell of brimstone after him, a good man leaves a fragrance; and the company in the parlour enjoyed the aroma of Mr. Dangerfield's virtues, as he buttoned his white surtout over his breast, and dropt his vails into the palms of the carbuncled butler and fuddled footman in the hall.

It was a clear, frosty, star-lit night. White and stern was the face which he turned upward for a moment to the sky. He paused for a second in the ray of candlelight that gleamed through Puddock's window-shutter, and glanced on the pale dial of his large gold watch. It was only half-past eight o'clock. He walked on, glancing back over his shoulder, along the Dublin road.

"The drunken beast. My mind misgives me he'll disappoint," muttered the silver spectacles, gliding briskly onward.

When he reached the main street he peered curiously before him under the village tree, in quest of carriage lights.

"A lawless brute like that may be before his time as well as after." So he walked briskly forward, and up Sturk's door-steps, and knocked.

"The Dublin doctor hasn't come—eh?" he asked.

"No, sir, he isn't come yet—'twas nine o'clock, the mistress told me."

"Very good. Tell Mrs. Sturk, pray, that I,

Mr. Dangerfield, you know, will call, as I promised, at nine o'clock precisely."

And he turned again, and walked briskly over the bridge, and away along the Inchicore road overhanging the river. All was silent there. Not a step but his own was stirring, and the road in places so overhung with old trees that it was difficult to see a yard before one.

He slackened his pace, and listened, like a man who keeps an assignation, and listened again, and laughed under his breath; and sure enough, before long, the clink of a footstep was heard approaching swiftly from the Dublin direction.

Mr. Dangerfield drew aside under the deep shadow of a high hawthorn hedge, overhung by trees; and watching intently, he saw a tall, lank figure, with a peculiar gait and stoop of its own, glide stealthily by. He smiled after it in the dark.

The tall figure was that of our old friend, Zekiel Irons, the clerk. A sable form, as beseemed his ecclesiastical calling; and now a white figure was gliding without noise swiftly after him.

Suddenly, as he reached an open part of the road, a thin hand was laid on his shoulder, and, with a start, and a "hollo," he sprung round.

"Hey! why, you're as frightened as if you had seen Charles—Charles *Nutter*. Hey?—don't be uneasy. I heard from the parson yesterday morning you were to be with him to-night before nine o'clock, about that money you left in his hands, and I've

chanced to meet you; and this I want you to understand, Charles Nutter is in gaol, and we must not let him get out—do you see. That business settled, we're at rest. So, Mr. Irons, you must not show the white feather. Be bold—speak out what you know—now's the time to strike. I'll put your evidence, as you reported it to me, into shape, and you come to me to-morrow morning at eight o'clock; and mind you, I'll reward you this time, and better than ever you've fared before. Go on. Or stay—I'll go before."

And Mr. Dangerfield laughed one of his chilly laughs—and, with a nod to Irons, repeated—"eight o'clock"—and so walked on a little bit.

The clerk had not said a word. A perspiration broke forth on his forehead, and, wiping the drops away, he said—

"Lord have mercy upon us—Lord deliver us—Lord have mercy upon us," like a man dying.

Mr. Dangerfield's bold proposition seemed quite to overpower and unman him.

The white figure turned short, facing the clerk, and, said he—

"See you, Mr. Irons, I'm serious—there must be no shirking. If you undertake, you must go through; and, hark! in your ear—you shall have five hundred pounds. I put no constraint—say yes or no—if you don't like you needn't. Justice, I think, will be done even without your help. But till he's quiet—you understand—*nothing's* sure.

He has been dead and alive again—curse him; and till he's at rest, and on the surgeon's table,—ha! ha!—we shan't feel quite comfortable."

"Lord have mercy upon us!" muttered Irons, with a groan.

"Amen," said Dangerfield, with a sneering imitation.

"*There*, 'tis enough—if you have nerve to speak truth and do justice, you may have the money. We're men of business—you and I. If not, I shan't trouble you any more. If you like it, come to me at eight o'clock in the morning; if not, why, stay away, and no harm's done.

And with these werds, Mr. Dangerfield turned on his heel once more, and started at a lively pace for Chapelizod.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH MR. PAUL DANGERFIELD MOUNTS THE STAIRS OF THE HOUSE BY THE CHURCH-YARD, AND MAKES SOME ARRANGEMENTS.

THE white figure glided duskily over the bridge. The river rushed beneath in Egyptian darkness. The air was still, and a thousand celestial eyes twinkled down brightly through the clear deep sky upon the actors in this true story. He kept the left side, so that the road lay between him and the Phœnix door, which gaped wide with a great hospitable grin, and crimsoned the night air with a glow of candlelight.

The white figure turned the corner, and glided onward in a straight, swift line—straight and swift as fate—to the door of Doctor Sturk.

He knocked softly at the hall-door, and swiftly stept in and shut it.

"How's your master?"

"Jist the same way, plaze yer honour; jist sleepin'—still sleepin'—sleepin' always," answered the maid.

"Has the Dublin doctor come?"

"No"

"The mistress—where's she?"

"In the room, sir, with the masther."

"Present my service to her—Mr. Dangerfield's compliments, you know—and say I await her permission to come up stairs."

Presently the maid returned, with poor Mrs. Sturk's invitation to Mr. Dangerfield to walk up.

Up he went, leaving his white surtout and cocked-hat in the hall, and entered the chamber where pale little Mrs. Sturk, who had been crying a great deal, sat in a dingy old tabby saque, by the light of a solitary mould-candle at the bed-side of the noble Barney.

The mutton-fat wanted snuffing; but its light danced and splintered brilliantly over Mr. Dangerfield's resplendent shoe-buckles, and up and down his cut-steel buttons, and also glimmered in a more phosphoric way upon his silver spectacles, as he bowed at the door, arrayed in a puce cut velvet coat, lined with pink, long embroidered satin waist-coat, fine lace ruffles and cravat, his well-shaped leg gleaming glossily in silk, and altogether, in his glimmering jewellery, and purple and fine linen, resembling Dives making a complimentary visit to the garret of Lazarus.

Poor little Mrs. Sturk felt her obligations mysteriously enlarged by so much magnificence, and wondered at the goodness of this white-headed angel in point, diamonds, and cut velvet, who had dropped from the upper regions upon the sad and homely floor of her Barney's sick chamber.

"Dr. Dillon not yet arrived, madam? Well, 'tis precisely his hour; we shall have him soon. How does the patient? Ha! just as usual. How?—why there's a change, isn't there?"

"As how, sir?" inquired Mrs. Sturk, with a scared look.

"Why, don't you see? But you mustn't be frightened; there's one coming in whom I have every confidence."

"I don't see, sir. What is it Mr. Dangerfield? Oh, *pray*, sir?"

"Why—a—nothing very particular, only he looks more languid than when I saw him last, and discoloured somewhat, and his face more sunk, I think—eh?"

"Oh, no, sir—'tis this bad light—nothing more, indeed, sir. This evening, I assure you, Mr. Dangerfield, at three o'clock, when the sun was shining, we were all remarking how well he looked. I never saw—you'd have said so—such a wonderful improvement."

And she snuffed the candle, and held it up over Barney's grim features.

"Well, madam, I hope we soon may find it. 'Twill be a blessed sight—eh?—when he sits up in that bed, madam, as I trust he may this very night, and speak—eh?"

"Oh! my precious Barney!" and the poor little woman began to cry, and fell into a rhapsody of hopes, thanks-giving, anecdote, and prayer.

In the meanwhile Dangerfield was feeling his pulse, with his watch in the hollow of his hand.

"And aren't they better—his pulse, sir—they were stronger this morning by a great deal than last night—it was just at ten o'clock—don't you perceive, sir?".

"H'm—well, I hope, ma'am, we'll soon find *all* better. Now, have you got all things ready—you have, of course, a sheet well aired ?"

"A sheet—I did not know 'twas wanted."

"Hey, this will never do, my dear madam—he'll be here and nothing ready; and you'll do well to send over to the mess-room for a lump of ice. 'Tis five minutes past nine. If you'll see to these things, I'll sit here, madam, and take the best care of the patient—and, d'ye see, Mistress Sturk, 'twill be necessary that you take care that Toole hears nothing of Dr. Dillon's coming."

It struck me, when originally reading the correspondence which is digested in these pages, as hardly credible that Doctor Sturk should have continued to live for so long a space in a state of coma. Upon this point, therefore, I took occasion to ask the most eminent surgeon of my acquaintance, who at once quieted my doubts by detailing a very remarkable case cited by Sir A. Cooper in his lectures, Vol. I., p. 172. It is that of a seaman, who was pressed on board one of his Majesty's ships, early in the revolutionary war; and while

on board this vessel, fell from the yard-arm, and was taken up insensible, in which state he continued living for thirteen months and some days!

So with a little more talk, Mrs. Sturk, calling one of her maids, and leaving the little girl in charge of the nursery, ran down with noiseless steps and care-worn face to the kitchen, and Mr. Dangerfield was left alone in the chamber with the spell-bound sleeper on the bed.

In about ten seconds he rose sharply from his chair and listened; then very noiselessly he stepped to the door and listened again, and gently shut it.

Then Mr. Dangerfield moved to the window. There was a round hole in the shutter, and through it he glanced into the street, and was satisfied.

By this time he had his white pockethandkerchief in his hands. He folded it deftly across and across into a small square, and then the spectacles flashed coldly on the image of Dr. Sturk, and then on the door; and there was a pause.

"What's that?" he muttered sharply, and listened for a second or two. It was only one of the children crying in the nursery. The sound subsided.

So with another long silent step, he stood by the capriole-legged old mahogany table, with the scallop shell containing a piece of soap and a wash-ball, and the basin with its jug of water standing therein. Again he listened while you might count two, and dipped the handkerchief, so folded,

into the water, and quietly squeezed it; and stood white and glittering by Sturk's bed-side.

People moved very noiselessly about that house, and scarcely a minute had passed when the door opened softly, and the fair Magnolia Macnamara popped in her glowing face and brilliant glance, and whispered,

"Are you there, Mrs. Sturk, dear?"

At the far side of the bed, Dangerfield, with his flashing spectacles and snowy aspect, and a sort of pant, rose up straight and looked into her eyes, like a white bird of prey disturbed over its carrion.

She uttered a little scream—quite pale on a sudden—for she did not recognise the sinister phantom who glimmered at her over the prostrate Sturk.

But Dangerfield laughed his quiet hollow "ha! ha! ha!" and said promptly,

"A strange old nurse I make, Miss Macnamara. But what can I do, Mrs. Sturk has left me in charge, and faith I believe our patient's looking mighty badly."

He had observed Miss Mag glancing from him to the dumb figure in the bed with a puzzled kind of horror.

The fact is, Sturk's face had a leaden tint; he looked, evidently enough, even in that dim candle-light, a great deal worse than the curious Miss Mag was accustomed to see him.

"He's very low, to-night, and seems oppressed,

and his pulse are failing; in fact, my dear young lady, he's plainly worse to-night than I like to tell poor Mrs. Sturk, you understand."

"And his face looks so shiny and damp-like," said Miss Mag, with a horrible sort of scrutiny.

"Exactly so, Miss, 'tis *weakness*," observed Dangerfield.

"And you were wiping it with your pocket-handkerchief when I looked in," continued Miss Mag.

"Was I—ha, ha—'tis wonderful how quick we learn a new business. I vow I begin to think I should make a very respectable nursetender."

"And what the dickens brings *him* up here?" asked Miss Mag of herself; so soon as the first shock was over, the oddity of the situation struck her as she looked with perplexed and unpleasant sort of inquiry at Mr. Dangerfield.

Just then up came the meek little Mrs Sturk, and the gentleman greeted her with a "Well, madam, I have not left his bed-side since you went down; and I think he looks a little better—just a little—eh?"

"I trust and pray, sir, that when the Doctor" ——began Mrs. Sturk, and stopped short, for Mr. Dangerfield frowned quickly, and pointed towards Miss Mag, who was now, after her wont, looking round the room for matter of interest.

"And is Pell comin' out to-night?" asked Miss Mag, quickly.

"No, truly, madam," answered the gentleman, "Dr. Pell's not coming—is he, Mrs. Sturk?"

"Dr. Pell!—oh, la—no, sir. No, my dear." And, after a pause, "Oh, ho. I wish it was over," she groaned, with her hand pressed to her side, looking with a kind of agony on Sturk.

"*What* over?" asked Miss Mag.

Just then a double-knock came to the hall-door, and Mr. Dangerfield signed sternly to Mrs. Sturk, who first stood up, with her eyes and mouth wide open, and then sat down, like a woman going to faint.

But the maid came up and told Miss Mag that her mother and Lieutenant O'Flaherty were waiting on the steps for her; and so, though loath to go unsatisfied, away she went, with a courtesy to Mr. Dangerfield and a kiss to Mrs. Sturk, who revived on hearing it was only her fat kindly neighbour from over the way, instead of Black Doctor Dillon, with his murderous case of instruments.

The gentleman in the silver spectacles accompanied her to the lobby, and offered his hand; but she dispensed with his attendance, and jumped down the stairs, with one hand to the wall and the other on the banisters, nearly a flight at a time; and the cackle of voices rose from the hall-door, which quickly shut, and the fair vision had vanished.

Dangerfield's silver spectacles gleamed phos-

phorically after her from under his lur'd forehead. It was not a pleasant look, and his mouth was very grim. In another instant he was in the room again, and glanced at his watch.

"'Tis half-past nine," he said, in a quiet tone, but with a gleam of intense fury over his face, "and that—that—Doctor named *nine*."

Dangerfield waited, and talked a little to Mrs. Sturk and the maid, who were now making preparations, in short sentences, by fits and starts of half-a-dozen words at a time. He had commenced his visit ceremoniously, but now he grew brusque, and took the command; and his tones were prompt and stern, and the women grew afraid of him.

Ten o'clock came. Dangerfield went down stairs, and looked from the drawing-room windows. He waxed more and more impatient. Down he went to the street. He did not care to walk towards the King's House, which lay on the road to Dublin; he did not choose to meet his boon companions again, but he stood for full ten minutes, with one of Dr. Sturk's military cloaks about him, under the village tree, directing the double-fire of his spectacles down the street, with an incensed steadiness, unrewarded, unrelieved. Not a glimmer of a link; not a distant rumble of a coach-wheel. It was a clear, frosty night, and one might hear a long way.

If any of the honest townfolk had accidentally lighted upon that muffled, glaring image under the

dark old elm, I think he would have mistaken it for a ghost, or something worse. The countenance at that moment was not prepossessing.

Mr. Dangerfield was not given to bluster, and never made a noise; but from his hollow jaws he sighed an icy curse towards Dublin, which had a keener edge than all the roaring blasphemies of Donnybrook together; and, with another shadow upon his white face, he re-entered the house

"He'll not come to-night, ma'am," he said with a cold abruptness.

"Oh, thank Heaven!—that is—I'm so afraid—I mean about the operation."

Dangerfield, with his hands in his pockets, said nothing. There was a sneer on his face, white and dark, somehow. That was all. Was he baffled, and was Dr. Sturk, after all, never to regain his speech?

At half-past ten o'clock, Mr. Dangerfield abandoned hope. Had it been Dr. Pell, indeed, it would have been otherwise. But Black Dillon had not a patient; his fame was in the hospitals. There was nothing to detain him but his vices, and five hundred pounds to draw him to Chapelizod. He had not come. He must be either brained in a row, or drunk under a table So Mr. Dangerfield took leave of good Mrs. Sturk, having told her in case the Doctor should come, to make him wait for his arrival before taking any measures, and directing that he should be sent for immediately.

So Mr. Dangerfield got into his white surtout silently in the hall, and shut the door quickly after him, and waited, a grim sentry, under the tree, with his face towards Dublin. Father Time had not blunted the white gentleman's perceptions, touched his ear with his numb fingers, or blown the smoke of his tobacco-pipe into his eyes. He was keen of eye, sharp of hearing; but neither sight nor sound rewarded him, and so he turned, after a few minutes, and glided away, like a white ghost, toward the Brass Castle.

In less than five minutes after, the thunder of a coach shook Dr. Sturk's windows, followed by a rousing peal on the hall-door, and Dr. Dillon, in dingy splendours, and a great draggled wig, with a gold-headed cane in his bony hand, stepped in; and, diffusing a reek of whishy-punch, and with a case of instruments under his arm, pierced the maid, who opened the door, through, with his prominent black eyes, and frightened her with his fiery face, while he demanded to see Mrs. Sturk, and lounged, without ceremony, into the parlour; where he threw himself on the sofa, with one of his bony legs extended on it, and his great ugly hand under his wig scratching his head.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH TWO COMRADES ARE TETE-A-TETE IN THEIR OLD QUARTERS, AND DOCTOR STURK'S CUE IS CUT OFF, AND A CONSULTATION COMMENCES.

THE buzz of a village, like the hum of a city, represents a very wonderful variety of human accent and feeling. It is marvellous how few families thrown together will suffice to furnish forth this *dubia cœna* of sweets and bitters.

The roar of many waters—the ululatus of many-voiced humanity—marvellously monotonous, considering the infinite variety of its ingredients, booms on through the dark. The story-teller alone can take up the score of the mighty medley, and read at a glance what every fife and fiddle-stick is doing. That pompus thrum-thrum is the talk of the great white Marseilles paunch, pietate gravis; the whine comes from Lazarus, at the area rails; and the bass is old Dives, roaring at his butler; the piccolo is contributed by the studious school-boy, whistling over his Latin Grammar; that wild, long note is poor Mrs. Fondle's farewell of her dead boy; the ugly barytone, rising from the tap-room, is what Wandering Willie calls a sculduddery song—shut your ears, and pass on;

and that clear soprano, in the nursery, rings out a shower of innocent idiotisms over the half-stripped baby, and suspends the bawl upon its lips.

So, on this night, as usual, there rose up towards the stars a throbbing murmur from our village—a wild chaos of sound, which we must strive to analyse, extracting from the hurly-burly each separate tune it may concern us to hear.

Captain Devereux was in his lodging. He was comparatively tranquil now; but a savage and impious despair possessed him. Serene outardly—he would not let the vulgar see his scars and sores; and was one of those proud spirits who build to themselves desolate places.

Little Puddock was the man with whom he had least reserve. Puddock was so kindly, and so true and secret, and cherished, beside, so great an admiration for him, that he greeted him rather kindly at a moment when another visiter would have fared scurvily enough. Puddock was painfully struck with his pallor, his wild and haggard eye, and something stern and brooding in his handsome face, which was altogether new and shocking to him.

"I've been *thinking*, Puddock," he said; "and thought with me has grown strangely like despair—and that's all. Why, man, *think*—what is there for me?—all my best stakes I've lost already; and I'm fast losing myself. How different, sir, is my fate from others? Worse men than I—every

way incomparably worse—and, d—— them, *they* prosper, while I go down the tide. 'Tisn't just!" And he swore a great oath. "'Tis enough to make a man blaspheme. I've done with life—I hate it. I'll volunteer. 'Tis my first thought in the morning, and my last at night, how well I'd like a bullet through my brain or heart. D—— memory, d—— feeling, d—— the world. I'm not a man that can be always putting prudential restraints upon myself. I've none of those plodding ways. The cursed fools that spoiled me in my childhood, and forsake me now, have all to answer for—I charge them with my ruin." And he launched a curse at them (meaning his aunt) which startled the plump soul of honest little Puddock.

"You must not talk that way, Devereux," he said, still a good deal more dismayed by his looks than his words. "Why are you so troubled with vapours and blue devils?"

"Nowhy!" said Devereux, with a grim smile.

"My dear Devereux, I say, you mustn't talk in that wild way. You—you talk like a ruined man!"

"And I so comfortable!"

"Why, to be sure, Dick, you have had some little rubs, and, maybe, your follies and your vexations; but, hang it, you are young; you can't get experience—at least, so I've found it—without paying for it. You mayn't like it just now;

but it's well worth the cost. Your worries and miscarriages, dear Richard, will make you steady."

"Steady!" echoed Devereux, like a man thinking of something far away.

"Ay, Dick—you've sown your wild oats."

On a sudden, says the Captain, "My dear little Puddock," and he took him by the hand, with a sort of sarcastic flicker of a smile, and looked in his face almost contemptuously; but his eyes and his voice softened before the unconscious bonhommie of the true little gentleman. "Puddock, Puddock, did it never strike you, my boy, that Hamlet never strives to speak a word of comfort to the ghost of the forlorn old Dane. He felt it would not do. Every man that's worth a button knows his own case best; and I know the secrets of my own prison-house. Sown my wild oats! To be sure I have, Puddock, my boy; and the new leaf I've turned over is just this; I've begun to reap them; and they'll grow my boy, and grow as long as grass grows; and—Macbeth has his dagger, you know, and I've my sickle—the handle towards my hand, that you can't see; and in the sweat of my cold brow, I must cut down and garner my sheaves; and as I sowed, so must I reap, and grind, and bake, the black and bitter grist of my curse. Don't talk nonsense, little Puddock. Wasn't it Gay that wrote the 'Beggar's Opera?' Ay! Why don't you play Macheath? Gay!—Ay—a pleasant fellow, and

his poems too. He writes—don't you remember—he writes,

> "So comes a reckoning when the banquet's o'er—
> The dreadful reckoning, and men smile no more."

"Puddock, throw up that window, the room's too hot—or, stay, never mind; read a book, Puddock—you like it, and I'll stroll a little along the path, and find you when I come back."

"Why it's dark," remonstrated his visiter.

"Dark? I dare say—yes, of course—very dark—but cool; the air is cool."

He talked like a man who was thinking of something else; and Puddock thought how strangely handsome he looked, with that pale dash of horror, like King Saul when the evil spirit was upon him; and there was a terrible misgiving in his mind. The lines of the old ballad that Devereux used to sing with a sort of pathethic comicality, were humming in his ear:—

> "He walked by the river, the river so clear –
> The river that runs through Kilkenny;
> His name was Captain Wade,
> And he died for that fair maid"—

and so following. What could he mean by walking, at that hour, alone, by the river's brink? Puddock, with a sinking and flutter at his heart, unperceived, followed him down stairs, and was beside him in the street.

"The path by the river?" said Puddock.

"The river—the path? Yes, sir, the path by the river. I thought I left you up-stairs," said Devereux, with an odd sort of sulky shrinking.

"Why, Devereux, I may as well walk with you, if you don't object," lisped Puddock.

"But I do object, sir," cried Devereux, suddenly, in a fierce high key, turning upon his little comrade. "What d'ye mean, sir? You think I mean to—to *drown* myself—ha, ha, ha! or what the devil's running in your head? I'm not a madman, sir, nor you a mad-doctor. Go home, sir—or go to—to where you will, sir; only go your own way, and leave me mine."

"Ah, Devereux, you're very quick with me," said Puddock, placing his plump little hand on Devereux's arm, and looking very gently and gravely in his face.

Devereux laid his hand upon Puddock's collar with an agitated sort of sneer. But he recollected himself, and that diabolical gloom faded from his face, and he looked more like himself, and slid his cold hand silently into little Puddock's; and so they stood for a while, by the door-step, to the admiration of Mrs. Irons—whom Devereux's high tones had called to her window.

"Puddock, I don't think I'm well, and I don't know quite what I've been saying. I ask your pardon. You've always been very good to me, Puddock. I believe—I believe you're the only

friend I have, and—Puddock, you won't leave me."

So up stairs they went together; and Mrs. Irons, from what she had over-heared, considered herself justified in saying, that "Captain Devereux was for drowning himself in the Liffey, and would have done so only for Lieutenant Puddock." And so the report was set a-going round the garrulous town of Chapelizod.

As Mr. Dangerfield glided rapidly along the silent road towards the Brass Castle, the little gate of his now leafless flower-garden being already in sight, he saw a dark figure awaiting him under the bushes which overhung it. It was Mr. Irons, who came forward, without speaking, and lifted his hat respectfully, perhaps abjectly, and paused for recognition.

"Hey! Irons?" said Mr. Dangerfield.

"At your service, sir."

"Well, and what says his worship?" asked the gentleman, playfully.

"I wanted to tell your honour that it won't make no odds, and I'll do it."

"Of course. You're right. It does make no odds. He'll hang whatever you do; and I tell you 'tis well he should, and only right *you* should speak the truth, too—'twill make assurance double sure."

"At eight o'clock in the morning, sir, I'll attend you," said Irons, with a sort of shiver.

"Good! and I'll jot down your evidence, and we'll drive to Mr. Lowe's, to Lucan, and you shall swear before him. And, you understand—I don't forget what I promised—you'll be a happier man every way for having done your duty; and here's half-a-crown to spend in the Salmon House."

Irons only moaned, and then said—

"That's all, sir. But I couldn't feel easy till it was off my mind."

"At eight o'clock I shall expect you. Good night, Irons."

And with his hands in his pockets he watched Irons off the ground. His visage darkened as for a while his steady gaze was turned toward Dublin. He was not quite so comfortable as he might have been.

Meanwhile Black Dillon, at Mrs. Sturk's request, had stalked up-stairs to the patient's bedside.

"Had not I best send at once for Mr. Dangerfield? she inquired.

"No occasion, ma'am," replied the eminent but slightly fuddled "Saw-bones," spitting beside him on the floor, "until I see whether I'll operate tonight. What's in that jug, ma'am? Chicken-broth? That'll do. Give him a spoonful. See—he swallows free enough;" and then Black Dillon plucked up his eyelids with a roughness that terrified the reverential and loving Mrs. Sturk, and examined the distorted pupils.

"You see the cast in that eye, ma'am; there's the pressure on the brain."

Dillon was lecturing her upon the case as he proceeded, from habit, just as he did the students in the hospital.

"No convulsions, ma'am?"

"Oh, no, sir, thank heaven!—nothing in the least—only quiet sleep, sir; just like that."

"Sleep, indeed—that's no sleep, ma'am, Boo-boh! I couldn't bawl that way in his face, ma'am, without disturbing him, ma'am, if it was. Now we'll get him up a bit—there, that's right—aisy. He was lying, ma'am, I understand, on his back, when they found him in the park, ma'am—so Mr. Dangerfield says—ay. Well, slip the cap off—backward—backward, you fool; that'll do. Who plastered his head, ma'am?"

"Doctor Toole, sir."

"Toole—Toole—h'm—I see—hey—hi—tut! 'tis the devil's pair of fractures, ma'am. See—nearer—d'ye see, there's two converging lines—d'ye see, ma'am?" and he indicated their directions with the silver handle of an instrument he held in his hand, "and serrated at the edges, I'll be bound."

And he plucked off two or three strips of plaster with a quick whisk, which made poor little Mrs. Sturk wince and cry, "Oh, dear, sir!"

"Threpan, indeed!" murmured Black Dillon, with a coarse sneer, "did they run the scalpel anywhere over the occiput, ma'am?"

"I—I—truly, sir—I'm not sure," answered Mrs. Sturk, who did not perfectly understand a word he said.

The Doctor's hair had not been cut behind. Poor Mrs. Sturk, expecting his recovery every day, would not have permitted the sacrilege, and his dishevelled cue lay under his shoulders. With his straight surgical scissors Black Dillon snipt off this sacred appendage before the good lady knew what he was about, and cropt the back of his head down to the closest stubble.

"Will you send, if you please, ma'am, for Doctor—Doctor—thingumee?"

"Doctor Toole?" inquired Mrs. Sturk.

"Doctor Toole, ma'm; yes," answered the surgeon.

He himself went down to the coach at the hall-door, and in a few minutes returned with a case, and something in a cloth. From the cloth he took an apparatus; like the cushioned back of a chair, with straps and buckles attached to it, and a sort of socket, the back of which was open, being intended to receive the head in.

"Now, ma'am, we'll prop him up comfortable with this, if you please."

And having got it into place, and lowered by a screw, the cushions intended to receive his head, and got the lethargic trunk and skull of the Artillery Doctor well-placed for his purpose, he took out a roll of sticking-plaster and a great piece of

lint, and laid them on the table, and unlocked his box, which was a large one, and took out several instruments, silver-mounted, straight and crooked, with awful adaptations to unknown butcheries and tortures, and then out came another—the veritable trepan—resembling the homely bit-and-brace, but slender, sinister, and quaint, with a murderous sort of elegance.

"You may as well order in half-a-dozen clean towels, if you please, ma'am."

"Oh! Doctor, you're not going to have an operation to-night," gasped Mrs. Sturk, her face quite white and damp, and her clasped hands trembling.

"Twenty to one, ma'am," he replied, with a slight hiccup, "we'll have nothing of the kind; but have them here, ma'am, and some warm water for fear of accidents—though maybe 'tis only for a dhrop of punch we'll be wanting it," and his huge, thirsty mouth grinned facetiously; and just then Dr. Toole entered the room. He was confoundedly surprised when he found Black Dillon there. Though bent on meeting him with hauteur and proper reserve, on account of his damnable character, he was yet cowed by his superior knowledge, so that Tom Toole's address was strangely chequered with pomposity and alarm.

Dillon's credentials there was, indeed, no disputing, so they sent for Moore, the barber; and, while he was coming, they put the women out of the room, and sat in consultation.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH MR. MOORE THE BARBER ARRIVES, AND THE MEDICAL GENTLEMEN LOCK THE DOOR.

THE ladies were not much the wiser, though, I confess, they were not far removed from the door. The great men inside talked indistinctly and technically, and once Doctor Dillon was so unfeeling as to crack a joke—they could not distinctly hear what—and hee-haw brutally over it. And poor little Mrs. Sturk was taken with a great palpitation, and looked as white as a ghost, and was, indeed, so obviously at the point of swooning that her women would have removed her to the nursery and placed her on the bed, but that such a procedure would have obliged them to leave the door of their sick master's room, just then a point of too lively interest to be deserted. So they consoled their mistress, and supported her with such strong moral cordials as compassionate persons in their rank and circumstances are prompt to administer.

"Oh! ma'am, jewel, don't be takin' it to heart that away—though, dear knows, 'tis no way surprisin' you would; for may I never sin if ever I seen such a murtherin' steel gimblet as the red-

faced docthor—I mane the Dublin man—has out on the table beside the poor masther—'tid frighten the hangman to look at it—an' six towels, too! Why, ma'am dear, if 'twas what they wor goin' to slaughter a bullock they wouldn't ax more nor that."

"Oh! don't. Oh! Katty, Katty—don't, oh! don't."

"An' why wouldn't I, my darlin' misthress, tell you what's doin', the way you would not be dhruv out o' your senses intirely if you had no notion, ma'am dear, iv what they're goin' to do to him?"

At this moment the door opened, and Doctor Dillon's carbuncled visage and glowing eyes appeared.

"Is there a steady woman there—not a child, you know, ma'am? A—*you'll* do (to Katty). Come in here, if you please, and we'll tell you what you're to do."

So, being nothing loath, she made her courtsey and glided in.

"Oh! doctor," gasped poor Mrs. Sturk, holding by the hem of his garment, "do you think it will kill him?"

"No, ma'am—not to-night, at any rate," he answered, drawing back; but she still held him.

"Oh! doctor, you think it *will* kill him."

"No, ma'am—there's always some danger."

"Danger of what, sir?"

"Fungus, ma'am—if he gets over the chance of inflammation. But, on the other hand, ma'am,

we may do him a power of good; and see, ma'am, 'twill be best for you to go down or into the nursery, and we'll call you, ma'am, if need be—that is, if he's better, ma'am, as we hope."

"Oh! Mr. Moore, it's you," sobbed the poor lady, holding fast by the sleeve of the barber, who that moment, with many reverences and "your servant, ma'am," had mounted to the lobby with the look of awe-struck curiosity, in his long, honest face, which the solemn circumstances of his visit warranted.

"You're the man we sent for?" demanded Dillon, gruffly.

"'Tis good Mr. Moore," cried trembling little Mrs. Sturk, deprecating and wheedling him instinctively to make him of her side, and lead him to take part with her and resist all violence to her husband—flesh of her flesh, and bone of her bone.

"Why don't you spake, sor-r-r? Are you the barber we sent for or no? What ails you, man?" demanded the savage Doctor Dillon, in a suppressed roar.

"At your sarviçe, ma'am—sir," replied Moore, with submissive alacrity.

"Come in here, then. Come in, will you?" cried the doctor, hauling him in with his great red hand.

"There now—there now—there—there," he said gruffly, extending his palm to keep off poor Mrs. Sturk.

So he shut the door, and poor Mrs. Sturk heard him draw the bolt, and felt that her Barney had passed out of her hands, and that she could do nothing for him now but only clasp her hands and gasp up her prayers for his deliverance; and so great indeed was her anguish and panic, that she had not room for the feminine reflection how great a brute Doctor Dillon was.

So she heard them walking this way and that, but could not distinguish what they said, only she heard them talking; and once or twice a word reached her, but not very intelligible, such as—

"'Twas Surgeon Beauchamp's—see that."

"Mighty curious."

Then a lot of mumbling, and

"Cruciform, of course."

This was said by Doctor Dillon, near the door, where he had come to take an additional candle from the table that stood there; as he receded it lost itself in mumble again, and then she heard quite plainly—

"Keep your hand there."

And a few seconds after,

"Hold it there and don't let it drip."

And then a little more mumbled dialogue, and she thought she heard—

"Begin now."

And there was a dead silence of many seconds; and Mrs. Sturk felt as if she must scream, and her heart beat at a gallop, and her dry, white lips silently called upon har Maker for help, and

she felt quite wild, and very faint; and heard them speak brief and low together, and then another long silence; and then a loud voice, in a sort of shriek, cry out that name—holy and awful—which we do not mix in tales like this. It was Sturk's voice; and he cried in the same horrid shriek, "Murder—mercy—Mr. Archer."

And poor Mrs. Sturk, with a loud hysterical cry, that quivered with her agony, answered from without, and wildly rattled at the door-handle, and pushed with all her feeble force to get in, in a kind of crescendo screaming—"Oh, Barney—Barney—*Barney—sweetheart*—what are they *doing?*"

"Oh! blessed hour!—ma'am—'tis the master himself that is talking;" and with a very pale face the maid, who stood in the doorway beside her, uttered her amazed thanksgiving.

And the doctors' voices were now heard plainly enough soothing the patient, and he seemed to have grown more collected; and she heard him—she thought—repeat a snatch of a prayer, as a man might just rescued from a shipwreck; and he said in a tone more natural in one so sick and weak, "I'm a dead man—he's done it—where is he?—he's murdered me."

"Who?" demanded Toole's well-known voice.

"Archer—the villain—Charles Archer."

"Give me the cup with the claret and water, and the spoon—there it is," said Dillon's rough bass tones.

And she heard the maid's step crossing the floor, and then there was a groan from Sturk.

"Here, take another spoonful, and don't mind talking for a while. It's doing mighty well. There, don't let him slip over—that's enough."

Just then Toole opened the door enough to put his head through, and gently restraining poor Mrs. Sturk with his hand, he said with a vigorous whisper—

"'Twill all go well, ma'am, we hope, if he's not agitated; you must not go in, ma'am, nor talk to him—by-and-bye you may see him, but he must be quiet now; his pulse are very regular at present—but you see, ma'am, we can't be too cautious.

While Toole was thus discoursing her at the door, she heard Dr. Dillon washing his hands, and Sturk's familiar voice sounding so strange after the long silence, say very languidly and slowly—

"Take a pen, sir—some one—take and write—write down what I say."

"Now, ma'am, you see he's bent on talking," said Toole, whose quick ear caught the promise of a revelation. "I must be at my post, ma'am—the bed-post—hey! We may joke now, ma'am, that the patient's recovered his speech; and, you know, you mustn't come in—not till we tell you it's safe—there now—rely on me—I give you my word of honour, he's doing as well as we could have hoped for."

And Toole shook her trembling little hand very

cordially, and there was a good-natured tear twinkling in his eye.

And Toole closed the door again, and they heard Sturk murmur something more; and then the maid, who was within, was let out by Toole, and the door closed and bolted again, and a sort of cooing and murmuring recommenced.

After a while, Toole absolutely pale, and looking very stern, opened the door, and, said he, in a quiet way—

"Ma'am, may I send Katty down to the King's House, with a note to Mr.—a note to the King's House—ma'am—I thank you—and see, Katty, good girl, ask to see the gentleman himself, and take his answer from his own lips."

And he tore off the back of a letter, and pencilled on it these words—

"My dear Sir,—Dr. Sturk has been successfully operated upon by me and another gentleman; and being restored to speech and recollection, but very weak, desires earnestly to see you, and make an important disclosure to you as a justice of the peace.

"I am, sir, your very obedient, humble servant,

"Thomas Toole."

Upon this note he clapt a large seal with the Toole arms, and when it was complete, placed it in the hands of Katty, who, with her riding-hood on, and her head within it teeming with all sorts

of wild conjectures and horrible images, and her whole soul in a whirl of curiosity, hurried along the dark street, now and then glinted on by a gleam through a shutter, or enlivened by the jingle of a harpsichord, or a snatch of talk and laughter heard faintly through the windows, and along the Dublin-road to the gate of the King's House. The hall-door of this hospitable mansion stood open, and a flood of red candle-light fell upon one side of the gray horse, saddle, and holster pipes, which waited the descent of Mr. Lowe, who was shaking hands with the hospitable Colonel at the threshold.

Katty was just in time, and the booted gentleman, in his surtout and cape, strode back again into the light of the hall-door, and breaking the seal, there read, with his clear cold eye, the lines which Toole had pencilled, and thrusting it into his coat pocket, and receiving again the fuddled butler's benedictions—he had given him half-a crown—he mounted his gray steed, and at a brisk trot, followed by his servant, was, in little more than two minutes' time, at Dr. Sturk's door.

Moore, the barber, *functus officio*, was now sitting in the hall, with his razors in his pocket, expecting his fee, and smelling pleasantly of the glass of whiskey which he had just drunk to the health and long life of the master—God bless him—and all the family.

Doctor Toole met Mr. Lowe on the lobby; he was doing the honours of the gastly ecclaircisse-

ment, and bowed him up to the room, with many an intervening whisper, and a sort of apology for Dillon, whom he treated as quite unpresentable, and resolved to keep as much as practicable in the background.

But that gentleman, who exulted in a good stroke of surgery, and had no sort of professional delicacy, calling his absent fathers and brethren of the scalpel and forceps by confounded hard names when he detected a blunder or hit a blot of theirs, met Mr. Lowe on the upper lobby.

"Your servant, sir," says he, rubbing his great red hands with a moist grin; "you see what I've done. Pell's no surgeon, no more than that—(Toole, he was going to say, but modified the comparison in time)—that candlestick! to think of him never looking at the occiput; and he found lying on his back—'twas well Mr. Dangerfield pitched on me—though I say it—why *shouldn't* I say it—a depression, the size of a shilling in the back of the head—a bit of depressed bone, you see, over the cerebellum—the trepan has relieved him."

"And was it Mr. Dangerfield!" inquired Lowe, who was growing to admire that prompt, cynical hero more and more every hour.

"Be gannies it just was. He promised me five hundred guineas to make him speak. What all them solemn asses could not compass, that's sweepin' in their thousands every quarter, thanks to a discerning public. Baugh! He had heard of a rake-helly dog, with some stuff in his brain-

pan, and he came to me—and I done it—Black Dillon done it—ha, ha! That's for the pack of them. Baugh!"

Doctor Dillon knew that the profession slighted him; and every man's hand against him, his was against every man.

Sturk was propped up, and knew Lowe, and was, in a ghastly sort of way, glad to see him. He looked strangely pale and haggard, and spoke faintly.

"Take pen and ink," says he.

There were both and paper ready.

"He would not speak till you came," whispered Toole, who looked hotter than usual, and felt rather small, and was glad to edge in a word.

"An' don't let him talk too long; five minutes or so, and no more," said Doctor Dillon; "and give him another spoonful now—and where's Mr. Dangerfield?"

"And do you really mean to say, sir, he promised you a fee of *five*—eh?" said Toole, who could not restrain his somewhat angry curiosity.

"Five hundred guineas—ha, ha, ha!—be gannies, sir, there's a power of divarsion in that."

"'Tis a munificent fee, and prompted by a fine public spirit. We are all his debtors for it; and to you, sir, too. He's an early man, sir, I'm told. You'll not see him to-night. But, whatever he has promised is already performed; you may rely on his honour."

"If you come out at nine in the morning, Dr.

Dillon, you'll find him over his letters and desk, in his breakfast parlour," said Toole, who, apprehending that this night's work might possibly prove a hit for the disreputable and savage luminary, was treating him, though a good deal stung and confounded by the prodigious amount of the fee, with more ceremony than he did at first.

"Short accounts, you know," said Dillon, locking the lid of his case down upon his instruments. "But maybe, as you say, 'tis best to see him in the morning—them rich fellows is often testy—ha! ha! An' a word with you, Dr. Toole," and he beckoned his brother aside to the corner near the door—and whispered something in his ear—and laughed a little awkwardly—and Toole, very red and grave, lent him—with many misgivings, two guineas.

"An' see—don't let them give him too much of that—the chicken broth's too sthrong—put some wather to that, Miss, i' you plaze—and give him no more to-night—d'ye mind—than another half a wine-glass full of clart unless the Docthor here tells you."

So Dr. Dillon took leave, and his fiery steeds, whirling him onward, devoured, with their resounding hoofs, the road to Dublin, where he had mentally devoted Toole's two guineas to the pagan divinities whose worship was nightly celebrated at the old St. Columbkill.

"We had best have it in the shape of a deposition, sir, at once," said Lowe, adjusting himself at

the writing-table by the bed-side, and taking the pen in his fingers, he looked on the stern and sunken features of the resuscitated Doctor, recalled, as it were, from "the caverns of the dead and the gates of darkness," to reveal an awful secret, and point his cold finger at the head of the undiscovered murderer.

"Tell it as shortly as you can, sir, but without haste," said Toole, with his finger on his pulse. Sturk looked dismal and frightened, like a man with the hangman at his elbow.

"It was that d——d villain—Charles Archer—write that down—'twas a foul blow, sir—I'm murdered—I suppose."

And then came a pause.

"Give me a spoonful of wine—I was coming out of town at dusk—this evening—"

"No, sir; you're here some time, stunned and unconscious."

"Eh!—how long?"

"No matter, sir, now. Just say the date of the night it happened."

Sturk uttered a deep groan.

"Am I dying?" said he.

"No, sir, please goodness—far from it," said Toole.

"Fracture?" asked Sturk, faintly.

"Why—yes—something of the sort—indeed—altogether a fracture; but going on mighty well, sir."

"Stabbed anywhere—or gunshot wound?" demanded Sturk.

"Nothing of the kind, sir, upon my honour."

"You think—I have a chance?" and Sturk's cadaverous face was moist with the dews of an awful suspense.

"Chance!" said Toole, in his encouraging tone, "well, I suppose you have, sir—ha, ha! But, you know, you must not tire yourself, and we hope to have you on your legs again, sir, in a reasonable time."

"I'm very bad—the sight's affected," groaned Sturk.

"See, sir, you tire yourself to no purpose. You're in good hands, sir—and all will go well—as we expect—Pell has been with you twice"——

"H'm! Pell—that's good."

"And you're going on mighty well, sir, especially to-night."

"Doctor, upon your honour, have I a chance?"

"You have, sir—certainly—yes—upon my honour."

"Thank God!" groaned Sturk, turning up the whites of his eyes, and lifting up two very shaky hands.

"But you must not spoil it—and fatigue will, do that for you," remarked Toole.

"But, sir, sir—I beg pardon, Doctor Toole—but this case is not quite a common one. What Doctor Sturk is about to say may acquire an additional legal value by his understanding precisely the degree of danger in which he lies. Now, Doctor

Sturk, you must not be over much disturbed," said Lowe.

"No, sir—don't fear me—I'm not much disturbed," said Sturk.

"Well, Doctor Toole," continued Lowe, "we must depart a little here from regular medical routine — tell Doctor Sturk plainly all you think."

"Why—a"—and Doctor Toole cleared his voice, and hesitated.

"Tell him what you and Doctor Dillon think, sir. Why, Doctor Dillon spoke very plainly to me."

"I don't like his pulse, sir. I think you had better not have agitated him," muttered Toole with an impatient oath.

"'Tis worse to keep his mind doubtful, and on the stretch," said Lowe. "Doctor Toole, sir, has told you the bright side of the case. It is necessary, making the deposition you propose, that you should know t'other."

"Yes, of course—quite right—go on," said Sturk faintly.

"Why, you know," said Toole, sniffing, and a little sulkily, "you know, Doctor Sturk, we, Doctors, like to put the best foot foremost; but you can't but be aware, that with the fractures—*two* fractures—along the summit of the skull, and the operation by the trepan, behind your head, just accomplished, there must be, of course, some danger."

"I see, sir," said Sturk, very quietly, but look-

ing awfully cadaverous; "all I want to know, is, how long you think I may live?"

"You may recover altogether, sir—you may—but, of course—you may—there's a chance; and things might not go right," said Toole, taking snuff.

"I see—sir—'tis enough"—and there was a pause. "I'd like to have the sacrament, and pray with the clergyman a little—Lord, help me!—and my will—only a few words—I don't suppose there's much left me; but there's a power of appointment—a reversion of £600, stock—I'm tired."

"Here, take this," said Toole, and put half-a-dozen spoonsful of claret and water into his lips, and he seemed to revive a little. "There's no immediate hurry—upon my honour, Doctor Sturk, there isn't," said Toole. "Just rest aisy a bit; you're disturbed a good deal, sir; your pulse shows it; and you need not, I assure you, upon my conscience and honour—'tis quite on the cards you may recover."

And as he spoke, Toole was dropping something from a phial into a wine-glass—sal volatile—ether—I can't say; but when Dr. Sturk swallowed it there was a "potter-carrier's aroma about the room.

Then there was a pause for a while, and Toole kept his fingers on his pulse; and Sturk looked, for some time, as if he were on the point of fainting, which, in his case, might have proved very like dying.

"Have you the claret bottle in the room?" demanded Toole, a little flurried; for Sturk's pulses were playing odd pranks, and bounding and sinking in a dance of death.

"The what sir?" asked the maid.

"The *wine*, woman—this instant," said the Doctor, imperiously.

So, the moment he had the bottle, he poured out half a large glass, and began spooning it into Sturk's white parted lips.

Lowe looked on very uneasily; for he expected, as Toole did also, prodigious revelations; though each had a suspicion that he divined their nature tolerably clearly.

"Give him some more," said Toole, with his fingers on the sick man's wrist, and watching his countenance. "D—— it, don't be afraid—more, some more—more!"

And so the Artillery Doctor's spirit revived within him; though with flickerings and tremblings; and he heaved some great sighs, and moved his lips. Then he lay still for a while; and after that he spoke.

"The pen, sir—write," he said. "He met me in the Butcher's Wood; he said he was going to sleep in town," and Sturk groaned dismally; "and he began talking on business—and turned and walked a bit with me. I did not expect to see him there—he was frank and spoke me fair. We were walking slowly. He looked up in the sky with his hands in his coat-pockets, and was a step,

or so, in advance of me; and he turned short—I didn't know—I had no more fear than you—and struck me a blow with something he had in his hand. He rose to the blow on his toes—'twas so swift, I had no time—I could not see what he struck with, 'twas like a short bit of rope."

"Charles Archer; do you know him, Dr. Toole?" asked Lowe.

Toole shook his head.

"Charles Archer!" he repeated, looking at Sturk; "where does he live?" and he winked to Toole, who was about speaking, to hold his peace.

"Here—in this town—Chapelizod, up the river, a bit, with—with a—changed name," answered Sturk. And at the name he mentioned, Lowe and Toole, in silence and steadfastly, exchanged a pale, grim glance that was awful to see.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH A CERTAIN SONGSTER TREATS THE COMPANY TO A DOLOROUS BALLAD WHEREBY MR. IRONS IS SOMEWHAT MOVED.

It seemed that Mr. Dangerfield had taken Zekiel Irons' measure pretty exactly. The clerk had quite made up his mind to take the bold step urged upon him by that gentleman. He was a slow man. When one idea had fairly got into his head there was no room there for another. Cowardly and plodding; but when his cowardice was wrought upon to a certain pitch, he would wax daring and fierce from desperation.

He walked down to the village from the little gate of the Brass Castle, where he had talked with Mr. Dangerfield, appointing eight o'clock next morning for making the deposition; late now for all purposes but to nail him to a line of *vivâ voce* evidence when he should come to be examined on Charles Nutter's approaching trial. The whole way along he walked with the piece of silver, which Mr. Paul Dangerfield had given him, griped tight in his crooked fingers, in his breeches' pocket—no change in his grim and sinister face—no turn of the head—no side glance of the eye—all dark, riged, and tense.

The mechanism of long habit brought him round the corner to the door of the Salmon House, the "public" facing, but with the length of the street interposing, the Phœnix, whose lights were visible through and under the branches of the village tree. His mind wandered back to the Mills with a shock, and glided stealthily past the Brass Castle without dwelling there; and he looked down the street. Over the bridge, at the Elms, lay death in its awful purity. At his left, in the Gray Stone House, was Doctor Sturk—the witness with sealed lips—the victim of Charles Archer's mysterious prowess; and behind lay the church-yard, and the quiet little church with that vault and nameless coffin. Altogether, the suggestions and associations about him were not cheerful or comfortable. He squeezed the silver—Dangerfield's little remembrance—with a furious strain, and ground his teeth.

"I'm like a man surrounded. I wish I was out of it all;" he muttered, with a careworn glance.

So he entered the public-house.

There was not much business doing. Three friends, Smithfield dealers, or some such folk, talking loudly over their liquor; of prices and prospects; and one fat fellow, by the fire, smoking a pipe, with a large glass of punch at his elbow.

"Ah, then, Mr. Irons, an' is it yourself that's in it; and where in the world wor ye all this time?" said the landlady.

"Business, ma'am—business, Mrs. Molloy."

"An' there's your chair waitin' for you beside the fire, Mr. Irons, this month an' more—a cowld evening—and we all wondherin' what in the wide world was gone widg ye—this I do'no how long."

"Thank ye, ma'am—a pipe and a glass o' punch."

Irons was always a man of few words, and his laconics did not strike Mistress Molloy as anything very strange. So she wiped the little table at his side, and with one foot on the fender, and his elbow on his knee, he smoked leisurely into the fire-place.

To look at his face you would have supposed he was thinking; but it was only that sort of foggy vacuity which goes by the name of "a brown study." He never thought very clearly or connectedly; and his apathetic reveries, when his mood was gloomy, were furnished forth in a barren and monotonous way, with only two or three frightful figures, and a dismal scenery that seldom shifted.

The three gentlemen at the table called for more liquor, and the stout personage, sitting opposite to Irons, dropped into their talk, having smoked out his pipe, and their conversation became more general and hilarious; but Irons scarce heard it. Curiosity is an idle minx, and a soul laden like the clerk's has no entertainment for her. But when one of the three gentlemen who sat together—an honest but sad-looking person with a flaxen wig, and a fat, florid face—placing his

hand in the breast of his red plush waist-coat, and throwing himself back in his chair, struck up a dismal tune, with a certain character of psalmody in it, the clerk's ear was charmed for a moment, and he glanced on the singer, and sipped some punch: and the ballad, rude and almost rhymless, which he chanted had an undefined and unpleasant fascination for Irons. It was thus:—

"A man there was near Ballymooney,
Was guilty of a deed o' blood,
For thraveilin' alongside iv ould Tim Rooney,
He kilt him in a lonesome wood.

"He took his purse, and his hat, and cravat,
And stole his buckles and his prayer-book, too:
And neck-and-heels, like a cruel savage,
His corpus through the wood he drew.

"He pult him over to a big bog-hole,
And sunk him undher four-foot o' wather,
And built him down wid many a thumpin' stone,
And slipt the bank out on the corpus afther."

Here the singer made a little pause, and took a great pull at the beer-can, and Irons looked over his shoulder at the minstrel; but his uneasy and malignant glance encountered only the bottom of the vessel; and so he listened for more which soon came thus:—

"An' says he, Tim Rooney you're there my boy,
Kep' down in the bog-hole wid the force iv suction,
An' 'tisn't myself you'll throuble or annoy,
To the best o' my opinion, to the resurrection.

"With that, on he walks to the town o' Drumgoole,
And sot by the fire in an inn was there;
And sittin' beside him, says the ghost—'You fool!
'Tis myself's beside ye, Shamus, everywhere.'"

At this point the clerk stood up, and looked once more at the songster, who was taking a short pull again, with a suspicious and somewhat angry glance. But the unconscious musician resumed—

"'Up through the wather your secret rises;
The stones won't keep it, and it lifts the mould,
An' it tracks your footsteps, and your fun surprises,
An' it sits at the fire beside you black and cowld.

"'At prayers, at dances, or at wake or hurling;
At fair, or funeral, or where you may;
At your going out, and at your returning,
'Tis I'll be with you to your dying day.'"

"Is there much more o' that?" demanded Irons, rather savagely.

The thirsty gentleman in the red plush waistcoat was once more, as he termed it, "wetting his whistle;" but one of his comrades responded tartly enough—

"I'd like there was—an' if you mislike it, neighbour, there's the door."

If he expected a quarrel, however, it did not come; and he saw by Irons' wandering eye, fierce as it looked, that his thoughts for the moment were elsewhere. And just then the songster having wiped his mouth in his coat-sleeve, started afresh in these terms—

"'You'll walk the world with a dreadful knowledge,
And a heavy heart and a frowning brow;
And thinking deeper than a man in college,
Your eye will deaden, and your back will bow.

"'And when the pariod iv your life is over,
The frightful hour of judgment then will be;
And, Shamus Hanlon, heavy on your shoulder,
I'll lay my cowld hand, and you'll go wid me.'"

This awful ditty died away in the prolonged drone which still finds favour in the ears of our Irish rustic musicians, and the company now began to talk of congenial themes, murders, ghosts, and retributions, and the horrid tune went dismally booming on in Mr. Irons' ear.

Trifling, and apparently wholly accidental, as was this occurrence, the musical and moral treat had a very permanent effect upon the fortunes of Irons, and those of other persons who figure in our story. Mr. Irons had another and another glass of punch. They made him only more malign and saturnine. He sat in his corner by the fire, silent and dismal; and no one cared what was passing in the brain behind that black and scowling mask. He paid sternly and furiously, like a villain who has lost at play; and without a "good night," or any other leave-taking, glided ominously from the room; and the gentlemen who carried on the discourse and convivialities of the Salmon House, followed him with a jibe or two, and felt the pleasanter for the removal of that ungracious presence.

A few minutes later, Mr. Lowe stood on the hall-door step, and, calling to his man, gave him a little note and some silver, and a message—very impressively repeated—and the groom touched his hat, and buttoned up his coat about his neck, the wind being from the east, and he started, at something very near a gallop, for Dublin.

There was a man at the door of the Salmon House, who, with a taciturn and saturnine excitement, watched the unusual bustle going on at the door-steps of Doctor Sturk's dwelling. This individual had been drinking there for a while; and having paid his shot, stood with his back to the wall, and his hands in his pockets, profoundly agitated, and with a chaos of violent and unshaped thoughts rising and rolling in his darkened brain.

After Lowe went into the house again, seeing the maid still upon the steps, talking with Mr. Moore, the barber, who was making his lingering adieux there, this person drew near, and just as the tonsor made his final farewell, and strode down the street toward his own dwelling, he presented himself in time to arrest the retreat of the damsel.

"By your leave, Mistress Katty," said he, laying his hand on the iron rail of the door-steps.

"Oh, good jewel! an' is that yourself, Mr. Irons? And where in the world wor you this month an' more?"

"Business—nothin'—in Mullingar—an' how's the Docthor to-night?"

The clerk spoke a little thickly, as he commonly did on leaving the Salmon House.

"He's elegant, my dear—beyant the beyants—why, he's sittin' up, dhrinking chicken-broth, and talking law-business with Mr. Lowe."

"He's talkin'!"

"Ay is he, and Mr. Lowe just this minute writ down all about the way he come by the breakin' of his skull in the Park, and we'll have great doings on the head of it; for the master swore to it, and Doctor Toole"——

"An' who done it?" demanded Irons, ascending a step, and grasping the iron rail.

"I couldn't hear—nor no one, only themselves."

"An' who's that rode down the Dublin road this minute?"

"That's Mr. Lowe's man; 'tis what he's sent him to Dublin wid a note."

"I see," said Irons, with a great oath, which seemed to the maid wholly uncalled for; and he came up another step, and held the iron rail and shook it, like a man grasping a battle-axe, and stared straight at her, with a look so strange, and a visage so black, that she was half-frightened.

"A what's the matther wid you, Misther Irons?" she demanded.

But he stared on in silence, scowling through her face at vacancy, and swaying slightly as he griped the metal banister.

"I *will*," he muttered, with another most unclerklike oath, and he took Katty by the hand,

and shook it slowly in his own cold, damp grasp as he asked, with the same intense and forbidding look,

"Is Mr. Lowe in the house still?"

"He is, himself and Docthor Toole, in the back parlour."

"Whisper him, Katty, this minute, there's a man has a thing to tell him."

"What about?" inquires Katty.

"About a great malefactor."

Katty paused, with her mouth open, expecting more.

"Tell him now; at once, woman; you don't know what delay may cost."

He spoke impetuously, and with a bitter sort of emphasis, like a man in a hurry to commit himself to a course, distrusting his own resolution.

She was frightened at his sudden fierceness, and drew back into the hall and he with her, and he shut the door with a clang behind him, and then looked before him, stunned and wild, like a man called up from his bed into danger.

"Thank God. I'm in for it," muttered he, with a shudder and a sardonic grin, and he looked for a moment something like that fine image of the Wandering Jew, given us by Gustave Doré, the talisman of his curse dissolved, and he smiling cynically in the terrible light of the judgment-day.

The woman knocked at the parlour door, and Lowe opened it.

"Who's here?" he asked, looking at Irons,

whose face he remembered, though he forgot to whom it belonged.

"I'm Zekiel Irons, the parish clerk, please your worship, and all I want is ten minutes alone with your honour."

"For what purpose?" demanded the magistrate, eyeing him sharply.

"To tell you all about a damned murder."

"Hey—why—who did it?"

"Charles Archer," he answered; and screwed up his mouth with a convulsive grimace, glaring bloodlessly at the Justice.

"Ha! Charles Archer! I think we know something already about that."

"I don't think you do, though; and by your leave, you'll promise, if I bring it home to him, you'll see me safe through it. 'Tis what I'm the only witness living that knows all about it."

"Well, what is it about?"

"The murder of Mr. Beauclerc, that my Lord of Dunoran was tried and found guilty for."

"Why, all very good; but that did not happen in Ireland."

"No. At Newmarket, the Pied Horse."

"Ay, in England. I know; and that's out of our jurisdiction."

"I don't care. I'll go to London, if you like—to Bow-street—anywhere—so as I make sure to hang him; for my life is worse than death while he's at this side of the grave—and I'd rather be in my coffin—I would—than live within five miles

of him. Anyway, you'll hear what I have to say, and to *swear*, and send me safe across the water to Bow-street, or wherever else you think best; for, if he has his liberty, and gets sight o' me again, I'm a dead man."

"Come in here, Mr. Irons, and take a chair," said the Justice.

Doctor Toole was in the room, in a balloon-backed chair, regaling himself with a long pipe, and Mr. Lowe shut the door.

"We have another deposition, Doctor, to take; Mr. Irons, here, is prepared to swear informations of very singular importance."

"Irons, hollo! from what planet did you drop to-night?"

"Mullingar, sir.

"Nothing about the burning of the old woman at Tyrrell's Pass, eh?"

"No—'tis an old story. I don't care what comes of it, I'm innocent, only you'll say I kept it too long to myself. But you can't touch my life. I'm more afeard of him than you, and with good cause; but I think he's in a corner now, an' I'll speak out and take my chance, and you mustn't allow me to be murdered."

By this time Lowe had procured writing materials, and all being ready, he and the curious and astonished Doctor heard a story very like what we have already heard from the same lips.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. PAUL DANGERFIELD HAS SOMETHING ON HIS MIND, AND CAPTAIN DEVEREUX RECEIVES A MESSAGE.

Mr. Dangerfield having parted with Irons, entered the little garden, or shrubbery, which skirted on either side the short gravel walk, which expanded to a miniature court-yard before the door of the Brass Castle. He flung the little iron gate to with a bitter clang; so violent that the latch sprang from its hold, and the screaking iron swung quivering open again behind him.

Like other men who have little religion, Mr. Paul Dangerfield had a sort of vague superstition. He was impressible by omens, though he scorned his own weakness, and sneered at, and quizzed it sometimes in the monologues of his ugly solitude. The swinging open of the outer gate of his castle sounded uncomfortably behind him, like an invitation to shapeless danger to step in after him. The further he left it behind him, the more in his spirit was the gaping void between his two little piers associated with the idea of exposure, defencelessness, and rashness. This feeling grew so strong, that he turned about before he reached his hall-door, and, with a sensation akin to fury, retraced the fifteen or twenty steps that intervened,

and grasped the cold iron with the fiercest tension of his sinews, as if it had resented his first violence by a dogged defiance of his wishes, and spluttering a curse between his teeth, he dashed it to again—and again, as once more it sprang open from the shock.

"Who's master *now?*" snarled Mr. Paul Dangerfield, through his clenched teeth, and smiting the senseless iron with a vindictive swoop of his cane. I fancy his face at this moment had some of the peculiar lines and corrugations which we observe in that of Retzsch's Mephistophiles, when he gripes the arm of Faust to drag him from Margaret's cell. So he stood behind his iron grating, glaring and grinning defiance into the darkness, with his fingers clenched hard upon his cane.

Black Dillon's failure was a blow to the progress of his plans. It incensed him. "That d——d outcast! That *he* should presume so to treat a man who could master him so easily at any game, and buy and sell him body and soul, and had actually bargained to give him five hundred guineas—the needy, swinish miscreant! and paid him earnest beside—the stupid cheat! Drink—dice—women! Why, five hundred guineas made him free of his filthy paradise for a twelvemonth, and the leprous oaf could not quit his impurities for an hour, and keep the appointment that was to have made him master of his heart's desires."

At his hall-door he paused, listening intently, with his spectacles glimmering toward Chapelizod,

for the sound of a distant step; but there was no messenger afoot. He heard only the chill sigh of the air through the leafless branches.

Mr. Dangerfield had not his key with him; and he beat an unnecessarily loud and long tattoo upon his door, and, before it could possibly have been answered, he thundered a second through the passages.

Mrs. Jukes knew the meaning of that harsh and rabid summons. "There was something on the master's mind." His anxieties never depressed him as they did other men, but strung up his energies to a point of mental tension and exasperation which made him terrible to his domestics. It was not his acts—his conduct was always under control, but chiefly his looks, and accents, and an influence that seemed to take possession of him at such times that rendered him undefinably formidable to his servants.

"Ha!—mighty obleeging (he so pronounced the word)—let in at last—cold outside, ma'am. You've let out the fire I suppose?"

His tones were like the bark of a wolf, and there was a devilish smirk in his white face, as he made her a mock salutation, and glided into his parlour. The fire was bright enough, however, as Mrs. Jukes was much relieved to see; and dropping a courtsey, she inquired whether he would like a dish of tea, or anything?

"No, ma'am!" he snarled.

Would he like his dressing-gown and slippers?

"No, ma'am," again. So she dropped another courtsey, and sneaked away to the kitchen, with short, noiseless steps, and heard Mr. Dangerfield shut the door sharply.

His servants were afraid of him. They could not quite comprehend him. They knew it was vain trying to deceive him, and had quite given up lying and prevaricating. Neither would he stand much talking. When they prattled he brought them to the point sternly; and whenever a real anxiety rested on his mind he became pretty nearly diabolical. On the whole, however, they had a strange sort of liking for him. They were proud of his wealth, and of his influence with great people. And though he would not allow them to rob, disobey, or deceive him, yet he used them handsomsely, paid like a prince, was a considerate master, and made them comfortable.

Now Mr. Dangerfield poked up his fire and lighted his candles. Somehow, the room looked smaller he thought than it had ever seemed before. He was not nervous—nothing could bring him to that; but his little altercation with the iron gate, and some uncomfortable thoughts had excited him. It was an illusion merely—but the walls seemed to have closed in a foot or two, and the ceiling to have dropped down proportionably, and he felt himself confined and oppressed.

"My head's a little bit heated—*ira furor brevis*," and he sneered a solitary laugh, more like himself, and went out into his tiny hall, and opened

the door, and stood on the step for air, enjoying the cold wind that played about his temples Presently he heard the hollow clink of two pair of feet walking toward the village. The pedestrians were talking eagerly; and he thought, as they passed the little iron gate of his domain, he heard his own name mentioned, and then that of Mervyn. I dare say it was mere fancy; but, somehow, he did not like it, and he walked swiftly down to the little gate by the road side—it was only some twenty yards—keeping upon the grass that bounded it, to muffle the sound of his steps. This white phantom noiselessly stood in the shadow at the road side. The interlocutors had got a good way on, and were talking loud and volubly. But he heard nothing that concerned him from either again, though he waited until their steps and voices were lost in the distance.

The cool air was pleasant about his bare temples, and Mr. Paul Dangerfield waited a while longer, and listened for any sound of footsteps approaching from the village, but none such was audible; and beginning to feel a little chilly, he entered his domicile again, shut the hall-door, and once more found himself in the little parlour of the Brass Castle.

His housekeeper heard his harsh voice barking down the passage at her, and rising with a start from her seat, cried,

"At your service, sir."

"At a quarter to twelve o'clock fetch me a

sandwich and a glass of absynthe, and meanwhile, don't disturb me."

And she heard him enter his little parlour, and shut the door.

"There's something to vex, but nothing to threaten—nothing. It's all that comical dream—curse it! What tricks the brain plays us? 'Tis fair it should though. We work it while we please, and it plays when it may. The slave has his saturnalia, and flouts his tyrant. Ha, ha! 'tis time these follies were ended. I've something to do to-night."

So Mr. Dangerfield became himself again, and applied himself keenly to his business.

When I first thought of framing the materials which had accumulated in my hands into a narrative, dear little Lily Walsingham's death was a sore trouble to me. "Little" Lily I call her, but though slight, she was not little—rather tall, indeed.

It was, however, the term I always heard connected with her pretty name in my boyhood, when the old people, who had remembered her very long ago, mentioned her, as they used, very kindly, a term of endearment that had belonged to her, and in virtue of the child-like charm that was about her, had grown up with her from childhood. I had plans for mending this part of the record, and marrying her to handsome Captain Devereux, and making him worthy of her; but somehow I could not. From very early times I had known

the sad story. I had heard her beauty talked about in my childhood; the rich, clear tints, the delicate outlines, those tender and pleasant dimples, like the wimpling of a well; an image so pure, and merry and melancholy withal, had grown before me, and in twilight shadows visited the now lonely haunts of her brief hours; even the old church, in my evening rambles along the uplands of the Park, had in my eyes so saddened a grace in the knowledge that those slender bones lay beneath its shadows, and all about her was so linked in my mind with truth, and melancholy, and altogether so sacred, that I could not trifle with the story, and felt, even when I imagined it, a pang, and a reproach, as if I had mocked the sadness of little Lily's fate; so, after some ponderings and trouble of mind I gave it up, and quite renounced the thought.

And, after all, what difference should it make? Is not the generation among whom her girlish lot was cast long passed away? A few years more or less of life. What of them now? When honest Dan Loftus cited those lines from the "Song of Songs," did he not make her sweet epitaph? Had she married Captain Devereux, what would her lot have been? She was not one of those potent and stoical spirits, who can survive the wreck of their best affections, and retort injury with scorn. In forming that simple spirit, Nature had forgotten arrogance and wrath. She would never have fought against the cruelty of changed affections

if that or the treasons of an unprincipled husband had come. His love would have been her light and life, and when that was turned away, like a northern flower that has lost its sun, she would have only hung her pretty head, and died, in her long winter. So viewing now the ways of wisdom from a distance, I think I can see they were the best, and how that fair, young mortal, who seemed a sacrifice, was really a conqueror.

Puddock and Devereux on this eventful night, as we remember, having shaken hands at the door-steps, turned and went up-stairs together, very amicably again, to the Captain's drawing-room.

So Devereux, when they returned to his lodgings, had lost much of his reserve, and once on the theme of his grief, stormed on in gusts, and lulls, and thunder, and wild upbraidings, and sudden calms; and the good-natured soul of little Puddock was touched, and though he did not speak, he often dried his eyes quietly, for grief is conversant not with self, but with the dead, and whatever is generous moves us.

"There's no one stirring now, Puddock—I'll put my cloak about me, and walk over to the Elms, to ask how the Rector is to-night," said Devereux, muffling himself in his military mantle.

It was only the restlessness of grief. Like all other pain, grief is haunted with the illusion that change means relief; motion is the instinct of escape. Puddock walked beside him, and they went swiftly and silently together.

When they reached the other side of the bridge, and stood under the thorn-hedge fronting the leafless elms, Devereux was irresolute.

"Would you wish *me* to enquire?" asked Puddock. Devereux held him doubtfully by the arm for a moment or two, and then said gently—

"No, I thank you, Puddock—I'll go—yes—I'll go myself;" and so Captain Devereux went up to the door,

John Tracy, at the steps, told him that he thought his master wished to speak with him; but he was not quite sure. The tall muffled figure therefore waited at the door while John went in to tell his master, and soon returned to say that Doctor Walsingham would be much obliged to him to step into the study.

When the Doctor saw Devereux he stood up to meet him.

"I hope, sir," said Devereux, very humbly, "you have forgiven me."

The Doctor took his hand and shook it very hard, and said, "there's nothing—we're both in sorrow. Everyone—everyone is sorry, sir, but you more."

Devereux did not say anything, being moved, as I suppose. But he had drawn his cloak about his face, and was looking down.

"There was a little message—only a word or two," said the Doctor; "but everything of her's is sacred."

He turned over some papers in his desk, and

chose one. It was in Lilly's pretty handwriting.

"I am charged with this little message. Oh, my darling!" and the old man cried bitterly.

"Pray, read it—you will understand it—'tis easily read. What a pretty hand it was!"

So Devereux took the little paper, and read just the words which follow:—

"My beloved father will, I hope, if he thinks it right, tell Captain Richard Devereux that I was not so unkind and thankless as I may have seemed, but very grateful for his preference, of which I know, in many ways, how unworthy I was. But I do not think we could have been happy; and being all over, it is a great comfort to friends who are separated here, that there is a place where all may meet again, if God will; and as I did not see or speak with him since my dear father brought his message, I wished that so much should be said, and also to say a kind good-bye, and give him all good wishes.

"LILIAS.

"Friday evening."

Captain Richard Devereux read this simple little record through, and then he said—

"Oh, sir, may I have it—isn't it mine?"

We who have heard those wondrous aerial echoes of Killarney when the breath has left the bugle and its cadences are silent, take up the broken links of the lost melody with an answer far away,

sad and celestial, real, yet unreal, the fleeting yet lingering spirit of music, that is past and over, have something in memory by which we can illustrate the effect of these true voices of the thoughts and affections that have perished, returning for a few charmed moments regretfully and sweetly from the sea of eternal silence.

And so that sad and clear farewell, never repeated, was long after, in many a lonely night, answered by the voice of Devereux.

"Did she—did she know how I loved her? Oh, never, never! I'll never love any but you. Darling, darling—you can't die. Oh, no, no, no! Your place knows you still; your place is here—here—here."

And he smote his breast over that heart which, such as it was, cherished a pure affection for her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCERNING CERTAIN DOCUMENTS WHICH REACHED MR. MERVYN, AND THE WITCHES' REVELS AT THE MILLS.

I WOULD be ashamed to say how soon after Dangerfield had spoken to Mr. Mervyn, in the churchyard, on the Sunday afternoon, when he surprised him among the tombstones, the large-eyed young gentleman, with the long black hair, was at his desk, and acting upon his suggestion. But the *Hillsborough* was to sail next day; and Mr. Mervyn's letter, containing certain queries, and an order for twenty guineas on a London house, glided in that packet with a favouring breeze from the Bay of Dublin, on its way to the London firm of Elrington Brothers.

On the morning of the day whose events I have been describing in the last half-dozen chapters, Mr. Mervyn received his answer, which was to the following effect:—

"SIR,—Having made search for the Paper which you inquire after, we have Found one answering your description in a General way; and pursuant to your request and Direction, beg leave to forward you a Copy thereof, together with a Copy of a letter concerning it, received by the

same post from Sir Philip Drayton, of Drayton Hall, Sometime our Client, and designed, in Part to explain his share in the matter. Your order for twenty guineas, on Messrs. Trett and Penrose, hath come to hand, and been duly honoured, and we thankfully Accept the same, in Payment for all trouble had in this matter.

"&c., &c., &c."

The formal document which it enclosed said:—

"This is to certify that Charles Archer, Esq., aged, as shortly before his death he reported himself, thirty-five years, formerly of London, departed this life, on the 4th August, 1748, in his lodgings, in the city of Florence, next door to the "Red Lion," and over against the great entrance of the Church of the Holy Cross, in the which, having conformed to the holy Roman faith, he is buried.—Signed this 12th day of August, 1748.

"PHILIP DRAYTON, Baronet.
"GAETANO MELONI, M.D.
"ROBERT SMITH, Musician.

"We three having seen the said Charles Archer during his sickness, and after his decease."

Then followed the copy of the Baronet's letter to his attorneys, which was neither very long nor very business-like.

"Why the plague don't you make the scoundrel, Jekyl, pay. His mother's dead only t'other day,

and he must be full of money. I've scarce a marvedy in hand, now; so let him have a writ in his——, drat him. About that certificate, I'm almost sorry I signed it. I've bin thinking 'tis like enough I may be troubled about it. So you may tell 'em I know no more only what is there avouched. No more I do. He played at a faro-table here, and made a very pretty figure. But I hear now from Lord Orland that there are many bad reports of him. He was the chief witness against that rogue, Lord Dunoran, who swallowed poison in Newgate, and, they say, leaned hard against him, although he won much money of him, and swore with a blood-thirsty intention. But that is neither here nor there; I mean ill reports of his rogueries at play, and other doings, which, had I sooner known, my name had not bin to the paper. So do not make a noise about it, and maybe none will ask for't. As for Jack Jekyl, why not take the shortest way with him. You're very pitiful fellows; but I wish o' my conscince you'd take some pity o' me, and not suffer me to be bubbled," &c., &c.

There was only a sentence or two more, referring in the same strain to other matters of business, of which, in the way of litigation, he seemed to have no lack, and the letter ended.

"I'll go direct to London, and see these people, and thence to Florence. Gaetano Meloni—he may be living—who knows. He will remember the priest who confessed him. A present to a

religious house may procure—in a matter of justice, and where none can be prejudiced, for the case is very special—a dispensation, if he be the very Charles Archer—and he may—why not?—have disclosed all on his death-bed. First, I shall see Mr. Dangerfield—then those attorneys; and next make search in Florence; and, with the aid of whatever I can glean there, and from Irons, commence in England the intensest scrutiny to which a case was ever yet subjected."

Had it not been so late when he found this letter, on his return, he would have gone direct with it to the Brass Castle; but that being quite out of the question, he read it again, and again. It is wonderful how often a man will spell over and over the same common-place syllables, if they happen to touch a subject vitally concerning himself, and what theories and speculations he will build upon the accidental turn of a phrase, or the careless dash of a pen.

As we see those wild animals walk their cages in a menagerie, with the fierce instincts of suppressed action rolling in the vexed eye and vibrating in every sinew, even so we behold this hero of the flashing glance and sable locks treading, in high excitement, the floor of the cedar parlour. Every five minutes a new hope—a new conjecture, and another scrutiny of the Baronet's letter, or of the certificate of Archer's death, and hour after hour speeding by in the wild chase of successive chimeras.

While Mr. Justice Lowe's servant was spurring into town at a pace which made the hollow road resound, and struck red flashes from the stones, up the river, at the Mills, Mistress Mary Matchwell was celebrating a sort of orgie. Dirty Davy and she were good friends again. Such friendships are subject to violent vicissitudes, and theirs had been interrupted by a difference of opinion, of which the lady had made a note with a brass candlestick over his eye. Dirty Davy's expressive feature still showed the green and yellow tints of convalescence. But there are few philosophers who forgive so frankly as a thorough scoundrel, when it is his interest to kiss and be friends. The candlestick was not more innocent of all unpleasant feeling upon the subject than at that moment was Dirty Davy.

Dirty Davy had brought with him his chief clerk, who was a facetious personage, and boozy, and on the confidential footing of a common rascality with his master, who, after the fashion of Harry V. in his nonage, condescended in his frolics and his cups to men of low estate; and Mary Matchwell, though fierce and deep enough, was not averse on occasion, to partake of a bowl of punch, in sardonic riot, with such agreeable company.

Charles Nutter's unexpected coming to life no more affected Mary Matchwell's claim than his supposed death did her spirits. Widow or wife, she was resolved to make good her position, and the only thing she seriously dreaded was that an

intelligent jury, an eminent judge, and an adroit hangman, might remove him prematurely from the sphere of his conjugal duties, and forfeit his worldly goods to the crown.

Next morning, however, a writ or a process of some sort, from which great things were expected, was to issue from the court in which her rights were being vindicated. Upon the granting of this, Mistress Matchwell and Dirty Davy—estranged for some time, as we have said,—embraced. She forgot the attorney's disrespectful language and he the lady's brass candlestick, and, over the punch-bowl of oblivion and vain glory, they celebrated their common victory.

Under advice, M. M. had acquiesced, pending her vigorous legal proceedings, in poor little Sally Nutter's occupying her bed-room in the house for a little while longer. The beleagured lady was comforted in her strait by the worthy priest, by honest Dr. Toole, and not least, by that handsome and stalworth nymph, the daring Magnolia. That blooming Amazon was twice on the point of provoking the dismal sorceress, who kept her court in the parlour of the Mills, to single combat. But fortune willed it otherwise, and each time the duel had been interrupted in its formal inception, and had gone no further than that spirited prologue in which the female sex so faithfully preserve the tradition of those thundering dialogues which invariably precede the manual business of the Homeric fray.

This was the eve of a great triumph and a memorable gala. Next morning, Sally Nutter was to be scalped, roasted, and eaten up, and the night was spent in savage whoopings, songs, and dances. They had got a reprobate blind fiddler into the parlour, where their punch-bowl steamed—a most agreeable and roistering sinner, who sang indescribable songs to the quaver of his violin, and entertained the company with Saturnalian vivacity, jokes, jibes, and wicked stories. Larry Cleary, thou man of sin and music! methinks I see thee now. Thy ugly, cunning, pitted face, twitching and grinning; thy small, sightless orbs rolling in thy devil's merriment, and thy shining forehead red with punch. In the kitchen things were not more orderly; M. M.'s lean maid was making merry with the bailiff, and a fat and dreadful trollop with one eye—tipsy, noisy, and pugnacious.

Poor little Sally Nutter and her maids kept dismal vigil in her bed-room. But that her neighbours and her lawyer would in no sort permit it, the truth is, the frightened little soul would long ago have made herself wings, and flown anywhere for peace and safety.

It is remarkable how long one good topic, though all that may be said upon it has been said many scores of times, will serve the colloquial purposes of the good folk of the kitchen or the nursery. There was scarcely half-an-hour in the day during which the honest maids and their worthy little mistress did not discuss the dreadful

Mary Matchwell. They were one and all, though in different degrees, indescribably afraid of her. Her necromantic pretensions gave an indistinctness and poignancy to their horror. She seemed to know, by a diabolic intuition, what everybody was about—she was so noiseless and stealthy, and always at your elbow when you least expected. Those large, dismal eyes of hers, they said, glared green in the dark like a cat's; her voice was sometimes so coarse and deep, and her strength so unnatural, that they were often on the point of believing her to be a man in disguise. She was such a blasphemer too; and could drink what would lay a trooper under the table, and yet show it in nothing but the superintensity of her Satanic propensities. She was so malignant, and seemed to bear to all God's creatures so general a malevolence, that her consistent and superlative wickedness cowed and paralyzed them. The enigma grew more horrible every day and night, and they felt, or fancied, a sort of influence stealing over them which benumbed their faculty of resistance, and altogether unstrung their nerves.

The grand compotation going on in the parlour waxed louder and wilder as the night wore on. There were unseen guests there, elate and inspiring, who sat with the revellers—phantoms who attend such wassail, and keep the ladle of the punch-bowl clinking, the tongue of the songster glib and tuneful, and the general mirth alive and furious. A few honest folk, with the gift of a

second sight in such matters, discover their uncanny presence—leprous Impurity, insane Blasphemy, and the stony grin of unearthly Malice—and keep aloof.

To heighten their fun, this jovial company bellowed their abominable ballads in the hall, one of them about "Sally M'Keogh," whose sweetheart was hanged, and who cut her throat with his silver-mounted razor, and they hooted their jibes up the stairs. And at last Mary Matchwell, provoked by the passive quietude of her victim, summoned the three revellers from the kitchen, and invaded the upper regions at their head—to the unspeakable terror of poor Sally Nutter—and set her demon fiddler a scraping, and made them and Dirty Davy's clerk dance a frantic reel on the lobby outside her bed-room door, locked and bolted inside, you may be sure.

In the midst of this monstrous festivity and uproar, there came, all on a sudden, a reverberating double-knock at the hall-door, so loud and long that every hollow, nook, and passage of the old house rang again. Loud and untimely as was the summons, it had a character, not of riot, but alarm and authority. The uproar was swallowed instantly in silence. For a second only the light of the solitary candle shone upon the pale, scowling features of Mary Matchwell, and she quenched its wick against the wall. So the Walpurgis ended in darkness, and the company instinctively held their breaths.

There was a subdued hum of voices outside, and a tramping on the crisp gravel, and the champing and snorting of horses, too, were audible.

"Does none o' yez see who's in it?" said the blind fiddler.

"Hold your tongue," hissed Mary Matchwell, with a curse, and visiting the cunning pate of the musician with a smart knock of the candlestick.

"I wisht I had your thumb undher my grinder," said the fiddler, through his teeth, "whoever you are."

But the rest was lost in another and a louder summons at the hall-door, and a voice of authority cried sternly,

"Why don't you open the door?—hollo! there—I can't stay here all night."

"Open to him, madam, I recommend you," said Dirty Davy, in a hard whisper; "will I go?"

"Not a step; not a word;" and Mary Matchwell griped his wrist.

But a window in Mrs. Nutter's room was opened, and Moggy's voice cried out—

"Don't go, sir; for the love o' goodness, don't go. Is it father Roach that's in it?"

"'Tis I, woman—Mr. Lowe—open the door, I've a word or two to say."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE WHER-WOLF.

About a quarter of an hour before this, Mr. Paul Dangerfield was packing two trunks in his little parlour, and burning letters industriously in the fire, when his keen ear caught a sound at which a prophetic instinct within him vibrated alarm. A minute or two before he had heard a stealthy footstep outside. Then he heard the cook walk along the passage, muttering to herself, to the hall-door, when there was a whispering. He glanced round his shoulder at the window. It was barred. Then lifting the little table and its load lightly from before him, he stood erect, fronting the door, and listening intently. Two steps on tip-toe brought him to it, and he placed his fingers on the key. But he recollected a better way. There was one of those bolts that rise and fall perpendiculary in a series of rings, and bar or open the door by a touch to a rope connected with it by a wire and a crank or two.

He let the bolt softly drop into its place; the rope was within easy reach, and with his spectacles gleaming white on the door, he kept humming a desultory tune, like a man over some listless occupation.

Mr. Paul Dangerfield was listening intently, and stept as softly as a cat. Then, with a motion almost elegant, he dropt his right hand lightly into his coat-pocket, where it lay still in ambuscade.

There came a puffing night air along the passage, and rattled the door; then a quiet shutting of the hall-door, and a shuffling and breathing near the parlour.

Dangerfield humming his idle tune with a white and sharpening face, and a gaze that never swerved, extended his delicately-shaped fingers to the rope, and held it in his left hand. At this moment the door-handle was suddenly turned outside, and the door sustained a violent jerk.

"Who's there?" demanded the harsh, prompt accents of Dangerfield, suspending his minstrelsy—"I'm busy."

"Open the door—we've a piece of intelligence to gie ye."

"Certainly—but don't be tedious." (He drew the string, and the bolt shot up). "Come in sir."

The door flew open; several strange faces presented themselves on the threshold, and at the same instant, a stern voice exclaimed—

"Charles Archer, I arrest you in the King's name."

The last word was lost in the stunning report of a pistol, and the foremost man fell with a groan. A second pistol already gleamed in Dangerfield's hand, and missed. With a spring

like a tiger, he struck the hesitating constable in the throat, laying his scalp open against the door-frame, and stamping on his face as he fell; and clutching the third by the cravat, he struck at his breast with a knife, already in his hand. But a pistol-shot, from Lowe, struck his right arm, scorching the cloth; the dagger and the limb dropt, and he staggered back, but recovered his equilibrium, and confronted them with a white skull-like grin, and a low "ha, ha, ha!"

It was all over, and the silver spectacles lay shattered on the floor, like a broken talisman, and a pair of gray, strangely-set, wild eyes glared upon them.

The suddenness of his assault, his disproportioned physical strength and terrific pluck, for a second or two, confounded his adversaries; but he was giddy—his right arm dead by his side. He sat down in a chair confronting them, his empty right hand depending near to the floor, and a thin stream of blood already trickling down his knuckles, his face smiling, and shining whitely with the damp of anguish, and the cold low "ha, ha, ha!" mocking the reality of the scene."

"Henious old villain!" said Lowe, advancing on him.

"Well, gentlemen, I've shown fight, eh?—and now I suppose you want my watch, and money, and keys,—eh?"

"Read the warrant, sir," said Lowe, sternly.

"Warrant! hey—warrant?—why, this is some-

thing new—will you be so good as to give me a glass of water—thank you—hold the paper a moment longer—I can't get this arm up." With his left hand he set down the tumbler-glass, and then held up the warrant.

"Thank ye. Well, this warrant's for Charles Archer."

"*Alias* Paul Dangerfield—if you read, sir."

"Thank you—yes—I see—that's news to me. Oh! Mr. Lowe—I did not see *you*—I havn't hurt you, I hope? Why the plague do you come at these robbing hours? We'd have all fared better had you come by daylight."

Lowe did not take the trouble to answer him.

"I believe you've *killed* that constable in the exercise of his duty, sir; the man's dead;" said Lowe, sternly.

"Another gloss on my text; why invade me like house-breakers?" said Dangerfield, with a grim scoff.

"No violence, sirrah, on your peril—the prisoner's wounded," said Lowe, catching the other fellow by the collar and thrusting him back; he had gathered himself up giddily, and swore he'd have the scoundrel's life.

"Well, gentlemen, you have made a *false* arrest, and shot me while defending my person—*you*—four to one!—and caused the death of your accomplice; what more do you want?"

"You must accompany us to the county gaol, sir; where I'll hand in your committal."

"Dr. Toole, I presume, may dress my arm?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Good! what more?"

"There's a coach at the door, you'll please to step in, sir."

"Good, sir, again; and now permit me to make a remark. I submit, sir, to all this violence, and will go with you, under protest, and with a distinct warning to you, Mr. Lowe, and to your respectable body-guard of prize-fighters and ruffians—how many?—two, four, five, six, upon my honour, counting the gentlemen upon the floor, and yourself, sir—seven, pitted against one old fellow, ha, ha, ha!—a distinct warning, sir, that I hold you accountable for this outrage, and all its consequences."

"See to that man; I'm afraid he has killed him," said Lowe.

He was not dead, however, but, as it seemed, suffering intense pain, and unable to speak, except in a whisper. They got him up with his back to the wall.

"You issue a warrant against another man whom I believe to be dead, and execute it upon *me*—rather an Irish proceeding, sir; but, perhaps, if not considered impertinent, you will permit me to inquire what is the particular offence which that other person has committed, and for which you have been pleased to shoot me?"

"You may read it on the warrant, sir; 'tis for a murderous assault on Doctor Sturk."

"Hey? better and better! why, I'm ready to pay five hundred guineas to make him speak; and you'll soon find how expensive a blunder, you've committed, sir," observed Dangerfield, with a glare of menace through his hollow smile.

"I'll stand that hazard, sir," rejoined Lowe, with a confident sneer.

The dreadful sounds of the brief scuffle had called up the scared and curious servants. The smell of the pistol-smoke, the sight of blood, the pale faces of the angry and agitated men, and the spectacle of their master, mangled, ghastly, and smiling, afrighted Mrs. Jukes; and the shock and horror expressed themselves in tears and distracted lamentations.

"I must have your keys, sir, if you please," said Mr. Lowe.

"A word first—here, Jukes," he addressed his housekeeper; "stop that, you fool!" (she was blubbering loudly), "'tis a mistake, I tell you; I shall be back in an hour. Meanwhile, here are my keys; let Mr. Lowe, there, have them whenever he likes—all my papers, sir, (turning to Lowe). I've nothing, thank heaven! to conceal. Pour some port wine into that large glass."

And he drank it off, and looked better; he appeared before on the point of fainting.

"I beg pardon, gentlemen—will you drink some wine?"

"I thank you, no, sir. You'll be good enough to give me those keys," (to the housekeeper).

"Give them—certainly," said Dangerfield.

"Which of them opens the chest of drawers in your master's bed-chamber facing the window?" He glanced at Dangerfield, and thought that he was smiling wider, and his jaws looked hollower, as he repeated—

"If she does not know it, I'll be happy to show it you."

With a surly nod, Mr. Lowe requited the prisoner's urbanity, and followed Mrs. Jukes into her master's bed-chamber; there was an old-fashioned oak chest of drawers facing the window.

"Where's Captain Cluffe," enquired Lowe.

"He stopped at his lodgings, on the way," answered the man; "and said he'd be after us in five minutes."

"Well, be good enough, madam, to show me the key of these drawers."

So he opened the drawers in succession, beginning at the top, and searching each carefully, running his fingers along the inner edges, and holding the candle very close, and grunting his disappointment as he closed and locked each in its order.

In the mean time, Doctor Toole was ushered into the little parlour, where sat the disabled master of the Brass Castle. The fussy little mediciner showed in his pale, stern countenance, a sense of the shocking reverse and transformation which the great man of the village had sustained.

"A rather odd situation you find me in, Doctor

Toole," said white Mr. Dangerfield, in his usual harsh tones, but with a cold moisture shining on his face; "under *duresse*, sir, in my own parlour, charged with murdering a gentleman whom I have spent five hundred guineas to bring to speech and life, and myself half murdered by a justice of the peace and his discriminating followers, ha, ha! I'm suffering a little pain, sir; will you be so good as to lend me your assistance?"

Toole proceeded to his task much more silently than was his wont, and stealing, from time to time, a glance at his noticeable patient with the wild gray eyes, as people peep curiously at what is terrible and repulsive.

"'Tis broken, of course?" said Dangerfield.

"Why, yes, sir," answered Toole; "the upper arm—a bullet, sir. H'm, ha—yes; it lies only under the skin, sir."

And with a touch of the sharp steel it dropped into the doctor's fingers, and lay on a bloody bit of lint on the table by the wine-glasses. Toole applied his sticking-plaster, and extemporised a set of splints, and had the terrified cook at his elbow tearing up one of her master's shirts into strips for bandages; and so went on neatly and rapidly with his shifty task.

In the mean time, Cluffe had arrived. He was a little bit huffed and grand at being nailed as an evidence, upon a few words carelessly, or, if you will, confidentially dropped at his own mess-table, where Lowe chanced to be a guest; and certainly

with no suspicion that his little story could in any way be made to elucidate the mystery of Sturk's murder. He would not have minded, perhaps, so much, had it not been that it brought to light and memory again the confounded ducking sustained by him and Puddock, and which, as an officer and a very fine fellow, he could not but be conscious was altogether an undignified reminiscence.

"Yes, the drawers were there, he supposed; those were the very ones, he stooped but little; it must have been the top one, or the next to it. The thing was about as long as a drumstick, like a piece of whip handle, with a spring in it; it bent this way and that, as he dried it in the towel, and at the but it was ribbed round and round with metal rings—devilish heavy."

So they examined the drawers again, took everything out of them, and Captain Cluffe, not thinking it a soldier-like occupation, tacitly declined being present at it, and, turning on his heel, stalked out of the room.

"What's become of it, ma'am?" said Lowe, suddenly and sternly, turning upon Mrs. Jukes, and fixing his eyes on hers. There was no guilty knowledge there.

"He never had any such thing, that I know of," she answered, stoutly; "and nothing could be hid from me in these drawers, sir; for I had the key, except when it lay in the lock, and it must ha' been his horsewhip; it has some rings like of

leather round it, and he used to lay it on these drawers."

Cluffe was, perhaps, a little bit stupid, and Lowe knew it; but it was the weakness of that good magistrate to discover in a witness for the crown many mental and moral attributes which he would have failed to recognise in him had he appeared for the prisoner.

"And where's that whip, now?" demanded Lowe.

"By the hall-door, with his riding-coat, sir," answered the bewildered housekeeper.

"Go on, if you please ma'am, and let me see it."

So to the hall they went, and there, lying across the pegs from which Mr. Dangerfield's surtout and riding-coat depended, there certainly was a whip with the butt fashioned very much in the shape described by Captain Cluffe; but alas, no weapon—a mere toy—leather and cat-gut.

Lowe took it in his hand, and weighing it with a look of disgust and disappointment, asked rather impatiently—

"Where's Captain Cluffe?"

The Captain had gone away.

"Very well, I see," said Lowe, replacing the whip; "that will do. The hound!"

Mr. Lowe now re-entered the little parlour, where the incongruous crowd, lighted up with Mr. Dangerfield's wax-lights and several kitchen candles flaring in greasy brass sticks, were assisting

at the treatment of the master of the castle and the wounded constables.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Dangerfield, standing erect, with his coat-sleeve slit, and his arm braced up in splints, stiff and helpless in a sling, and a a blot of blood in his shirt-sleeve, contrasting with the white intense smirk of menace upon his face; "if you have quite done with my linen and my housekeeper, sir, I'm ready to accompany you under protest, as I've already said, wherever you design to convey my mangled person. I charge you, sir, with the safety of my papers and my other property which you constrain me to abandon in this house; and I'll think you'll rue this night's work to the latest hour of your existence."

"I've done, and will do my duty, sir," replied Lowe, with dry decision.

"You've committed a d——d outrage; duty? ha, ha, ha!"

"The coach is at the door, hey?" asked Lowe.

"I say, sir," continued Dangerfield, with a wolfish glare, and speaking in something like a suppressed shriek, "you *shall* hear my warning and my protest, although it should occupy the unreasonable period of two whole minutes of your precious time. You half murder, and then arrest me for the offence of another man, and under the name of a man who has been dead and buried full twenty years. I can prove it; the eminent London house of Elrington Brothers can prove it; the hand-

writing of the late Sir Philip Drayton, Baronet, of Drayton Hall, and of two other respectable witnesses to a formal document, can prove it; dead and rotten—*dust*, sir. And in your stupid arrogance, you blundering Irishman, you dare to libel me—your superior in everything—with his villanous name, and the imputation of his crimes—to violate my house at the dead of night—to pistol me upon my own floor—and to carry me off by force, as you purpose, to a common gaol. Kill Dr. Sturk indeed! Are you mad, sir? *I* who offered a fee of five hundred guineas even to bring him to speech; *I* who took the best medical advice in *London* on his behalf; *I* who have been his friend only too much with my Lord Castlemallard, and who, to stay his creditors, and enable his family to procure for him the best medical attendance, and to afford him, in short, the best chance of recovery and life, have, where *you* neither lent or bestowed a shilling—poured out my money as profusely as you, sir, have poured out my blood, every drop of which, sir, shall cost you a slice of your estate. But even without Sturk's speaking one word, I've evidence which escaped *you*, conceited blockhead, and which, though the witness is as mad almost as yourself, will yet be enough to direct the hand of justice to the right man. There *is* a Charles, sir, whom all suspect, who awaits trial, judgment, and death in this case, the wretched Charles Nutter of the Mills, sir, whose motive is patent, and on whose

proceedings a light will, I believe, be thrown by the evidence of Zekiel Irons, whatever that evidence may be worth."

"I don't care to tell you, sir, that 'tis partly on the evidence of that same Zekiel Irons that I've arrested *you*," said Mr. Justice Lowe.

"Zekiel Irons, *me!* What—Zekiel Irons charge me with the crime which he was here, not two hours since, fastening on oath upon Charles Nutter! Why, sir, he asked me to bring him to your residence in the morning, that he might swear to the information which he repeated in my presence, and of which there's a note in that desk. 'Pon my life, sir, 'tis an agreeable society, this; bedlam broke loose—the mad directing the mad, and both falling foul of the sane. One word from Doctor Sturk, sir, will blast you, so soon as, please heaven, he shall speak."

"He *has* spoken, sir," replied Lowe, whose angry passions were roused by the insults of Dangerfield, and who had, for the moment, lost his customary caution.

"Ha!" cried Dangerfield, with a sort of gasp, and a violent smirk, the joyousness of which was, however, counteracted by a lurid scowl, and a wonderful livid glare in his wild eyes; "ha! he has? Bravo, sir, bravissimo!" and he smirked wider and wider, and beat his uninjured hand upon the table, like a man applauding the *denouement* of a play. "Well, sir; and notwithstanding his declaration, you arrest me upon the monstrous

assertion of a crazy clerk, you consummate block-head!"

"'Twon't do, sir; you shan't sting me by insult into passion; nor frighten me by big words and big looks into hesitation. My duty's clear, and be the consequences what they may, I'll carry the matter through."

"Frighten you! ha, ha, ha!" and Dangerfield glared at his bloody shirt-sleeve, and laughed a chilly sneer; "no, sir, but I'll punish you, with Doctor Sturk's declaration against the babble of poor Zekiel Irons. I'll quickly close your mouth."

"Sir, I never made it a practice yet to hide evidence from a prisoner. Why should I desire to put you out of the world, if you're innocent? Doctor Sturk, sir, has denounced you distinctly upon oath. Charles Archer, going by the name of Paul Dangerfield, and residing in this house, called the 'Brass Castle,' as the person who attempted to murder him in the Butcher's Wood."

"*What*, sir?—Doctor Sturk denounce *me!* Fore heaven, sir—it seems to me you've all lost your wits. Doctor Sturk!—Doctor Sturk charge *me* with having assaulted him! why—curse it, sir—it can't possibly be—you can't believe it; and, if he said it, the man's raving still."

"He has said it, sir."

"Then, sir, in the devil's name, didn't it strike you as going rather fast to shoot me on my own hearthstone—*me*, knowing all you do about me—with no better warrant than the talk of a man-

with a shattered brain, awakening from a lethargy of months? Sir, though the laws afford no punishment exemplary enough for such atrocious precipitation, I promise you I'll exact the last penalty they provide; and now, sir, take me where you will; I can't resist. Having shot me; do what you may to interrupt my business; to lose my papers and accounts; to prevent my recovery, and to blast my reputation—sir, I shall have compensation for all."

So saying, Dangerfield, with his left hand, clapt his cocked hat on, and with a ghastly smile nodded a farewell to Mrs. Jukes, who, sobbing plentifully had placed his white surtout, cloakwise over his shoulders, buttoning it about his throat. The hall-door stood open; the candles flared in the night air, and with the jaunty, resolute step of a man marching to victory and revenge, he walked out, and lightly mounted to his place. She saw the constables get in, and one glimpse more of the white grim face she knew so well, the defiant, smirk, the blood-stained shirt-sleeve, and the coach-door shut. At the crack of the whip and the driver's voice, the horses scrambled into motion, the wheels revolved, and the master of the Brass Castle, and the equipage, glided away like a magic lantern group, from before the eyes and the candle of the weeping Mrs. Jukes.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH DOCTOR TOOLE AND DIRTY DAVY CONFER IN THE BLUE-ROOM.

THE coach rumbled along toward Dublin at a leisurely jog. Notwithstanding the firm front Mr. Lowe had presented, Dangerfield's harangue had affected him unpleasantly. Cluffe's little bit of information respecting the instrument he had seen the prisoner lay up in his drawer on the night of the murder, and which corresponded in description with the wounds traced upon Sturk's skull, seemed to have failed. The handle of Dangerfield's harmless horse-whip, his mind misgave him, was all that would come of *that* piece of evidence; and it was impossible to say there might not be something in all that Dangerfield had uttered. Is it a magnetic force, or a high histrionic vein in some men, that makes them so persuasive and overpowering, and their passion so formidable! But, with Dangerfield's presence, the effect of his plausibilities and his defiance passed away. The pointed and consistent evidence of Sturk, perfectly clear as he was upon every topic he mentioned, and the corroborative testimony of Irons, equally distinct and damning—the whole case blurred and disjointed, and for a moment grown

unpleasantly hazy and uncertain in the presence of that white sorcerer, re-adjusted itself now that he was gone, and came out in iron and compact relief—impregnable.

"Run, boys, one of you, and open the gate of the Mills," said Lowe, whose benevolence, such as it was, expanded in his intense feeling of relief. "'Twill be good news for poor Mistress Nutter. She'll see her husband in the morning."

So he rode up to the Mills, and knocked his alarm, as we have seen and heard, and there told his tidings to poor Sally Nutter, vastly to the relief of Mistress Matchwell, the Blind Fiddler, and even of the sage, Dirty Davy; for there are persons upon the earth to whom a sudden summons of any sort always sounds like a call to judgment, and who, in any such ambiguous case, fill up the moments of suspense with wild conjecture, and a ghastly summing-up against themselves: can it be this—or that—or the other old, buried, distant villany, that comes back to take me by the throat?

Having told his good news in a few dry words to Mrs. Sally, Mr. Lowe superadded a caution to the dark lady down stairs, in the face of which she, being quite reassured by this time, grinned and snapped her fingers, and in terms defied, and even cursed the tall magistrate without rising from the chair in which she had re-established herself in the parlour. He mounted his hunter again, and followed the coach at a pace which promised soon to bring him up with that lumber-

ing conveyance; for Mr. Lowe was one of those public officers who love their work, and the tenant of the Brass Castle was no common prisoner, and well worth seeing, though at some inconvenience, safely into his new lodging.

Next morning, you may be sure, the news was all over the town of Chapelizod. All sorts of cross rumours and wild canards, of course, were on the wind, and every new fact or fib borne to the door-step with the fresh eggs, or the morning's milk and butter, was carried by the eager servant into the parlour, and swallowed down with their toast and tea by the staring company.

Upon one point all were agreed: Mr. Paul Dangerfield lay in the county gaol, on a charge of having assaulted Dr. Sturk with intent to kill him. The women blessed themselves, and turned pale. The men looked queer when they met one another. It was altogether so astounding—Mr. Dangerfield was so rich—so eminent—so moral—so charitable—so above temptation It had come out that he had committed, some said three, others as many as fifteen secret murders. All the time that the neighbours had looked on his white head in church as the very standard of probity, and all the prudential virtues rewarded, they were admiring and honouring a masked assassin. They had been bringing into their homes and families an undivulged and terrible monster. The wher-wolf had walked the homely streets of their village. The ghoul, unrecognised, had prowled among the

graves of their church-yard. One of their fairest princesses, the lady of Belmont, had been on the point of being sacrificed to a vampire. Horror, curiosity, and amazement, were everywhere.

Charles Nutter, it was rumoured, was to be discharged on bail early, and it was mooted in the club that a deputation of the neighbours should ride out to meet him at the boundaries of Chapelizod, welcome him there with an address, and accompany him to the Mills as a guard of honour; but cooler heads remembered the threatening and unsettled state of things at that domicile, and thought that Nutter would, all things considered, like a quiet return best; which view of the affair was, ultimately, acquiesced in.

For Mary Matchwell, at the Mills, the tidings which had thrown the town into commotion had but a solitary and a selfish interest. She was glad that Nutter was exculpated. She had no desire that the king should take his worldly goods to which she intended helping herself: otherwise he might hang or drown for aught she cared. Dirty Davy, too, who had quaked about his costs, was greatly relieved by the turn which things had taken; and the plain truth was that, notwithstanding his escape from the halter, things looked very black and awful for Charles Nutter and his poor little wife, Sally.

Doctor Toole, at half-past nine, was entertaining two or three of the neighbours, chiefly in oracular whispers, by the fire in the great parlour of the

Phœnix, when he was interrupted by Larry, the waiter, with—

"Your horse is at the door, Docther," (Toole was going into town, but was first to keep an appointment at Doctor Sturk's with Mr. Lowe), "and" continued Larry, "there's a fat gentleman in the blue room wants to see you, if you plaze."

"Hey?—ho! let's see then," said little Toole, bustling forth with an important air. "The blue room, hey?"

When he opened the door of that small apartment there stood a stout, corpulent, rather seedy and dusty personage, at the window, looking out and whistling, with his hat on. He turned lazily about as Toole entered, and displayed the fat and forbidding face of Dirty Davy.

"Oh! I thought it might be professionally, sir," said Toole, a little grandly; for he had seen the gentleman before, and had, by this time, found out all about him, and perceived he had no chance of a fee.

"It *is* professionally, sir," quoth Dirty Davy, "if you'll be so obleeging as to give me five minutes."

With that amiable egotism which pervades human nature, it will be observed, each gentleman interpreted "professionally" as referring to his own particular calling.

So Toole declared himself ready and prepared to do his office, and Dirty Davy commenced.

"You know me, I believe, sir?"

"Mr. David O'Reegan, as I believe," answered Toole.

"The same, sir," replied Davy. "I'm on my way, sir, to the Mills, where my client, Mrs. Nutter, (here Toole uttered a disdainful grunt) resides; and I called at your house, Doctor, and they sent me here; and I am desirous to prove to you, sir, as a friend of Miss Sarah Harty, styling herself Mrs. Nutter, that my clint's rights are clear and irresistible, in order that you may use any interest you may have with that ill-advised faymale—and I'm told she respects your advice and opinion highly—to induce her to submit without further annoyance; and I tell you, in confidence, she has run herself already into a very sarious predicament."

"Well, sir, I'll be happy to hear you," answered Toole.

"'Tis no more, sir, than I expected from your well-known candor," replied Dirty Davy, with the unctuous politeness with which he treated such gentlemen as he expected to make use of. "Now, sir, I'll open our case without any reserve or exaggeration to you, sir, and that, Doctor Toole, is what I wouldn't do to many beside yourself. The facts is in a nutshell. We claim our conjugal rights. Why, sir? Because, sir, we married the oppugnant, Charles Nutter, gentleman, of the Mills, and soforth, on the 7th of April, Anno Domini, 1750, in the Church of St. Clement Danes, in London, of which marriage

this, sir, is a verbatim copy of the certificate. Now, sir, your client—I mane your friend—Misthress Mary Harty, who at present affects the state and usurps the rights of marriage against my client, the rightful Mrs. Nutter, performed and celebrated a certain pretended marriage with the same Charles Nutter, in Chapelizod Church, on the 4th of June, 1758, seven years and ten months, wanting three days, subsequent to the marriage of my client. Well, sir, I see exactly, sir, what you'd ask: 'Is the certificate genuine?'"

Toole grunted an assent.

"Well, sir, upon that point I have to show you this," and he handed him a copy of Mr. Luke Gamble's notice served only two days before, to the effect that, having satisfied himself by inquiring on the spot, of the authenticity of the certificate of the marriage of Charles Nutter of the Mills, and soforth, to Mary Duncan, his client did not mean to dispute it. "And, sir, further, as we were preparing evidence in support of my client's and her maid's affidavit, to prove her identity with the Mary Duncan in question, having served your client—I mane, sir, asking your pardon again—your friend, with a notice that such corroboratory evidence being unnecessary, we would move the Court, in case it were pressed for, to give us the costs of procuring it, Mr. Luke Gamble forthwith struck, on behalf of his client, and admitted the sufficiency of the evidence. Now, sir, I mention these things, not as expecting you to believe them

upon my statement, you see, but simply to inquire of Mr. Gamble whether they be true or no; and if true, sir, upon his admission, then, sir, I submit we're entitled to your good offices, and the judicious inthurfarence of the Rev. Mr. Roach, your respectable priest, sir."

"My friend, sir, not my priest. I'm a churchman, sir, as everybody knows."

"Of course, sir—I ask your pardon again, Doctor Toole—sir, your friend to induce your client—*friend* I mane again, sir—Mistress Sarah Harty, ormerly housekeeper of Mr. Charless (so he pronounced it) Nutther, gentleman, of the Mills, and soforth, to surrendher quiet and peaceable possession of the premises and chattels, and withdhraw from her tortuous occupation dacently, and without provoking the consequences, which must otherwise follow in the sevarest o' forms;" or as he pronounced it, "fawrums."

"The sevarest o' grandmothers. Humbug and flummery! sir," cried Toole, most unexpectedly incensed, and quite scarlet.

"D'ye mane I'm a liar, sir. Is that what you mane?" demanded Dirty Davy, suddenly, like the Doctor, getting rid of his ceremonious politeness.

"I mane what I mane, and that's what I mane," thundered Toole, diplomatically.

"Then, tell your *friend* to prepare for consequences," retorted Dirty Davy, with a grin.

"And make my compliments to your client, or conjuror, or wife, or whatever she is, and tell her

that whenever she wants her dirty work done, there's plenty of other Dublin blackguards to be got to do it, without coming to Docthor Thomas Toole, or the Rev. Father Roach."

Which sarcasm he delivered with killing significance, but Dirty Davy had survived worse thrusts than that.

"She's a conjuror, is she? I thank you, sir."

"You're easily obliged, sir," says Toole.

"We all know what that manes. And these documents, *sworn* to by my client and myself, is a pack o' lies! Betther and betther! I thank ye again, sir."

"You're welcome, my honey," rejoined Toole, affectionately.

"An' you live round the corner. I know your hall-door, sir—a light brown, wid a brass knocker."

"Which is a fine likeness iv your own handsome face, sir," retorted Toole.

"An' them two documents, sir, is a fabrication and a forgery, backed up wid false affidavits?" continued Mr. O'Reegan.

"Mind that, Larry," says the Doctor, with a sudden inspiration, addressing the waiter, who had peeped in; "he admits that them two documents you see there, is forgeries, backed up with false affidavits; you heard him say so, and I'll call you to prove it."

"*You lie!*" said Dirty Davy, precipitately, for he was quite disconcerted at finding his own sophisical weapons so unexpectedly turned against him.

"You scum o' the airth!" cried Toole, hitting him, with his clenched fist right upon the nose, so vigorous a thump, that his erudite head with a sonorous crash hopped off the wainscot behind it; "you lying scullion!" roared the Doctor, instantaneously repeating the blow, and down went Davy, and down went the table with dreadful din, and the incensed Doctor bestrode his prostrate foe with clenched fists and flaming face, and his grand wig all awry, and he panting and scowling.

"Murdher, murdher, *murdher!*" screamed Dirty Davy, who was not much of a Spartan, and relished nothing of an assault and battery but the costs and damages.

"You—you—you"——

"Murdher—help—help—murdher—murdher!"

"Say it again, you cowardly sneaking, spying viper; say it *again*, can't you?"

It was a fine tableau, and a noble study of countenance and attitude.

"Sich a bloody nose I never seen before," grinned Larry, rubbing his hands over the exquisite remembrance. "If you only seed him, flat on his back, the great ould shnake, wid his knees and his hands up bawling murdher; an' his big white face and his bloody nose in the middle, like nothin' in nature, bedad, but the ace iv hearts in a dirty pack."

How they were separated, and who the particular persons that interposed, what restoratives were resorted to, how the feature looked half an

hour afterwards, and what was the subsequent demeanor of Doctor Toole, upon the field of battle, I am not instructed; my letters stop short at the catastrophe, and run off to other matters.

Doctor Toole's agitations upon such encounters did not last long. They blew off in a few thundering claps of bravado and defiance in the second parlour of the Phœnix, where he washed his hands and re-adjusted his wig and ruffles, and strutted forth, squaring his elbows, and nodding and winking at the sympathizing waiters in the inn hall; and with a half grin at Larry—

"Well, Larry, I think I showed him Chapelizod, hey?" said the Doctor, buoyantly, to that functionary, and marched diagonally across the broad street toward Sturk's house, with a gait and a countenance that might have overawed an army.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHAT DOCTOR STURK BROUGHT TO MIND, AND ALL THAT DOCTOR TOOLE HEARD AT MR. LUKE GAMBLE'S.

JUST as he reached Sturk's door, wagging his head and strutting grimly—and, palpably, still in debate with Dirty Davy—his thoughts received a sudden wrench in a different direction by the arrival of Mr. Justice Lowe, who pulled up his famous gray hunter at the steps of the house by the church-yard.

"You see, Doctor Toole, it won't do, waiting. The thing's too momentous."

"And so they walked up stairs and into the drawing-room, and sent their compliments to Mrs. Sturk, who came down in *deshabille*, with her things pinned about her, and all over smiles. Poor little woman! Toole had not observed until now how very thin she had grown.

"He's going on delighfully, gentlemen; he drank a whole cup of tea, weak of course, Doctor Toole, as you bid me; and he eat a slice of toast, and liked it, and two Naples biscuits, Mr. Lowe, and I know he'll be delighted to see you."

"Very good, madam, *very* good," said Toole.

"And he's looking better already. He waked out of that sweet sleep not ten minutes after you left this morning."

"Ay, he was sleeping very quietly," said Toole to Lowe. "May we go up, ma'am?"

"Oh! he'll be overjoyed, gentlemen, to see you, and 'twill do him an infinity of good. I can scarce believe my eyes. We've been tidying the study, the maid and I, and airing the cushions of his chair;" and she laughed a delighted little giggle. "And even the weather has taken up such beautiful sunshine; everything favourable."

"Well, Doctor Sturk," said Toole, cheerily, "we have a good account of you—a vastly good account, Doctor; and, by St. George, sir, we've been tidying——"

He was going to say the study, but little Mrs. Sturk put her finger to her lip in a wonderful hurry, raising her eyebrows and drawing a breath through her rounded lips, in such sort as arrested the sentence; for she knew how Barney's wrath always broke out when he thought the women had been in his study, and how he charged every missing paper for a month after upon their cursed meddling. But Sturk was a good deal gentler now, and had a dull and awful sort of apathy upon him; and I think it was all one to him whether the women had been in the study or not. So Toole said instead—

"We've been thinking of getting you down in a little while, Doctor, if all goes pleasantly; 'tis a lovely day, and a good omen—see how the sun shines in at the curtain."

But there was no responsive sunshine upon

Sturk's stern, haggard face, as he said very low—still looking on the foot-board—"I thank you, Doctor."

So after a few more questions, and a little bit of talk with Mrs. Sturk, they got that good lady out of the room, and said Lowe to the patient—

"I'm sorry to trouble you, Doctor Sturk, but there's a weighty matter at which you last night hinted; and Doctor Toole thought you then too weak; and in your present state, I would not now ask you to speak at any length, were the matter of less serious moment."

"Yes, sir," said Sturk, but did not seem about to speak any more; and after a few seconds Lowe continued,

"I mean, Doctor Sturk, touching the murder of Mr. Beauclerc, which you then said was committed by the same Charles Archer, who assaulted you in the Park."

"Ay, sir," said Sturk.

"The same murder of which Lord Dunoran was adjudged guilty.

Sturk moved his lips with a sort of a nod.

"And, Doctor Sturk, you remember you then said you had yourself *seen* Charles Archer do that murder.

Sturk lifted his hand feebly enough to his forehead, and his lips moved, and his eyes closed. They thought he was praying—possibly he was; so they did not interrupt him; and he said, all on

a sudden, but in a low dejected way, and with many pauses.

"Charles Archer. I never saw another such face; 'tis always before me. He was a man that everybody knew was dangerous—a damnable profligate besides—and, as all believed, capable of anything, though nobody could actually bring anything clearly home to him but his bloody duels, which, however, were fairly fought. I saw him only thrice in my life before I saw him here. In a place, at Newmarket, where they played hazard, was once; and I saw him fight Beau Langton; and I saw him murder Mr. Beauclerc. I saw it all!" And the Doctor swore a shuddering oath.

"I lay in the small room or closet, off the chamber in which he slept. I was suffering under a bad fracture, and dosed with opium. 'Tis all very strange, sir. I saw everything that happened. I saw him stab Beauclerc. Don't question me; it tires me I think 'twas a dagger. It looked like a small bayonet. I'll tell you how—all, by-and-bye."

He sipped a little wine and water, and wiped his lips with a very tremulous handkerchief.

"I never spoke of it, for I could not. The whole of that five minutes' work slipped from my mind, and was gone quite and clean when I awoke. What I saw I could not interrupt. I was in a cataleptic state, I suppose. I could not speak; but I saw like a lynx, and heard every whisper. When I wakened in the morning I remembered nothing. I did not know I had a secret. The

knowledge was sealed up until the time came. A sight of Charles Archer's face at any time would have had, as I suppose, the same effect. When I saw him here, the first time, it was at the General's, at Belmont; though he was changed by time, and carefully disguised, all would not do. I felt the sight of him was fatal. I was quite helpless; but my mind never stopped working upon it till—till"——

Sturk groaned.

"See now," said Toole, "there's time enough and don't fatigue yourself. There, now, rest quiet a minute."

And he made him swallow some more wine; and felt his pulse; and shook his head despondingly at Lowe, behind his back.

"How is it?" said Sturk, faintly."

"A little irritable—that's all," said Toole.

"Till one night, I say,"—Sturk resumed, after a minute or two, "it came to me all at once, awake—I don't know—or in a dream; in a moment I had it all. 'Twas like a page cut out of a book—lost for so many years." And Sturk moaned a desparing wish to heaven that the secret had never returned to him again.

"Yes, sir—like a page cut out of a book, and never missed till 'twas found again; and then sharp and clear, every letter from first to last. Then, sir—then—thinking 'twas no use at that distance of time taking steps to punish him, I—I foolishly let him understand I knew him. My

mind misgave me from the first. I think it was my good angel that warned me. But 'tis no use now. I'm not a man to be easily frightened. But it seemed to me he was something altogether worse than a man, and like—like Satan; and too much for me every way. If I was wise I'd have left him alone. But 'tis no good fretting now. It was to be. I was too outspoken—'twas always my way—and I let him know; and—and you see, he meant to make away with me. He tried to take my life, sir; and I think he has done it. I'll never rise from this bed, gentlemen. I'm done for."

"Come, Doctor Sturk, you mustn't talk that way, Pell will be out this evening, and Dillon may be—though faith! I don't quite know that Pell will meet him—but we'll put our heads together, and duce is in it or we'll set you on your legs again."

Sturk was screwing his lips sternly together, and the lines of his gruff haggard face were quivering, and a sullen tear or two started down from his closed eye.

"I'm—I'm a little nervous, gentlemen—I'll be right just now. I'd like to see the—the children, if they're in the way, that's all—by-and-bye, you know

"I've got Pell out, you see—not that there's any special need—you know; but he was here before, and it wouldn't do to offend him; and he'll see you this afternoon."

"I thank you, sir," said Sturk, in the same dejected way.

"And, sir," said Lowe, "if you please, I'll get this statement into the shape of a deposition or information, for you see 'tis of the vastest imaginable importance, and exactly tallies with evidence we've got elsewhere, and 'twouldn't do, sir, to let it slip."

And Toole thought he saw a little flush mount into Sturk's sunken face, and he hastened to say—

"What we desire, Dr. Sturk, is to be able to act promptly in this case of my Lord Dunoran. Measures must be taken instantly, you see, for 'tis of old standing, and not a day to be lost, and there's why Mr. Lowe is so urgent to get your statement in white and black."

"And sworn to," added Mr. Lowe.

"I'll swear it," said Sturk, in the same sad tones.

And Mrs. Sturk came in, and Toole gave leave for chicken broath at twelve o'clock, about two table-spoonsful, and the same at half-past one, when he hoped to be back again. And on the lobby he gave her, with a cheery countenance, all the ambiguous comfort he could. And Lowe asked Mrs. Sturk for more pens and paper, and himself went down to give his man a direction at the door, and on the way, in the hall, Toole looking this way and that, to see they weren't observed, beckoned him into the front parlour, and said he, in a low key—

"The pulse are up a bit, not very much, but still I don't like it—and very hard, you see—and what we've to dread, you know's inflammation; and he's so shocking low, my dear sir, we must let him have wine and other things, or we'll lose him that way; and you see its a mighty unpleasant case.

And coming into the hall, in a loud confident voice he cried—"And I'll be here again by half-past one o'clock.

And so he beckoned to the boy with his horse to come up, and chatted in the interim with Mr Lowe upon the steps, and told him how to manage him if he grew exhausted over his narrative; and then, mounting his nag, and kissing his hand and waving his hat to Mrs. Sturk, who was looking out upon him from Barney's window, he rode away for Dublin.

Toole, on reaching town, spurred on to the dingy residence of Mr. Luke Gamble. It must be allowed that he had no clear intention of taking any step whatsoever in consequence of what he might hear. But the little fellow was deuced curious; and Dirty Davy's confidence gave him a sort of right to be satisfied.

So with his whip under his arm, and a good deal out of breath, for the stairs were steep, he bounced into the attorney's sanctum.

"Who's *that?* *Is* that?——Why, bless my soul and body! 'tis yourself," cried Toole, after an astonished pause of a few seconds at the door

springing forward and grasping Nutter by both hands, and shaking them vehemently, and grinning very joyously and kindly the while.

Nutter received him cordially, but a little sheepishly. Indeed, his experiences of life, and the situations in which he had found himself since they had last met, were rather eccentric and instructive than quite pleasant to remember. And Nutter, in his way, was a proud fellow, and neither liked to be gaped at nor pitied.

But Toole was a thorough partizan of his, and had been urgent for permission to see him in gaol, and they knew how true he had been to poor Sally Nutter, and altogether felt very much at home with him.

So sitting in that twilight room, flanked with piles of expended briefs, and surrounded with neatly docketted packets of attested copies, notices, affidavits, and other engines of legal war—little Toole having expended his congratulations, and his private knowledge of Sturk's revelations, fell upon the immediate subject of his visit.

"That rogue, Davy O'Reegan, looked in on me, not an hour ago, at the Phœnix, (and he gave them a very spirited, but I'm afraid a somewhat fanciful description of the combat.) "And I'm afraid he'll give us a deal of trouble yet. He told me that the certificate——

"Ay—here's a copy;" and Luke Gamble threw a paper on the table before him.

"That's it—Mary Duncan—1750—the very

thing—the rascal! Well, he said, you know, but I knew better, that you had admitted the certificate formally."

"So I have, sir," said Mr. Gamble, drily, stuffing his hands into his breeches' pockets, and staring straight at Toole with elevated eyebrows, and as the little Doctor thought, with a very odd expression in his eyes.

"You *have* sir?"

"I have!" and then followed a little pause, and Mr. Gamble said—

"I did so, sir, because there's no disputing it—and—and I think, Doctor Toole, I know something of my business.

There was another pause, during which Toole, flushed and shocked, turned his gaze from Gamble to Nutter.

"'Tis a true bill, then?" said Toole, scarcely above his breath and very dismally.

A swarthy flush covered Nutter's dark face. The man was ashamed.

"'Tis nigh eighteen years ago, sir," said Nutter, embarrassed, as he well might be. "I was a younger man, then, and was bit, sir, as many another has been, and that's all."

Toole got up, stood before the fire-place, and hung his head, with compressed lips, and there was a silence, interrupted by the hard man of law, who was now tumbling over his papers in search of a document, and humming a tune as he did so.

"It may be a good move for Charles Nutter, sir, but it looks very like a check-mate for poor Sally," muttered Toole, angrily.

Mr. Luke Gamble either did not hear him, or did not care a farthing what he said; and he hummed his tune very contentedly.

"And I had, moreover," said he, "to make another admission for the same reason, videlicet, that Mary Matchwell, who now occupies a portion of the Mills, the promovent in this suit, and Mary Duncan mentioned in that certificate, are one and the same person. Here's our answer to their notice, admitting the fact."

"I thank you," said Toole again, rather savagely, for a glance over his shoulder had shown him the attorney's face grinning with malicious amusement, as it seemed to him, while he re-adjusted the packet of papers from which he had just taken the notice; "I saw it, sir, your brother lawyer, Mr. O'Reegan, sir, showed it me this morning."

And Toole thought of poor little Sally Nutter, and all the wreck and ruin coming upon her and the Mills; and began to con over his own liabilities, and to reflect seriously whether, in some of his brisk altercations on her behalf with Dirty Davy and his client, he might not have committed himself rather dangerously; and especially the consequences of his morning's collision with Davy grew in darkness and magnitude very seriously, as he reflected that his entire statement had turned

out to be true, and that he and his client were on the winning side.

"It seems to me, sir, you might have given some of poor Mrs. Nutter's friends at Chapelizod a hint of the state of things. I, sir, and Father Roach—we've meddled, sir, more in the business than—than—but no matter now—and all under a delusion, sir. And poor Mistress Sally Nutter—*she* doesn't seem to trouble you much, sir."

He observed that the attorney was chuckling to himself still more and more undisguisedly, as he slipped the notice back again into its place.

"You gentlemen of the law think of nothing, sir, but your clients. I suppose 'tis a good rule; but it may be pushed somewhat far. And what do you propose to do for poor Mistress Sally Nutter?" demanded Toole, very sternly, for his blood was up.

"She has heard from us this morning," said Mr. Gamble, grinning on his watch, "and she knows all by this time; and 'tisn't a button to her.

And the attorney laughed in his face; and Nutter, who had looked sulky and uncomfortable, could resist no longer, and broke into a queer responsive grin. It seemed to Toole like a horrid dream.

There was a tap at the door just at this moment.

"Come in," cried Mr. Gamble, still exploding in comtortable little bursts of half-suppressed laughter.

"Oh! 'tis you? Very good, sir," said Mr. Gamble, sobering a little. He was the same lanky, vulgar, and slightly-squinting gentleman, pitted with the small-pox, whom Toole had seen on a former occasion. And the little Doctor thought he looked even more cunning and meaner than before. Everything had grown to look repulsive, and every face was sinister now; and the world began to look like a horrible masquerade, full of half-detected murderers, traitors, and miscreants.

"There ins't a soul you can trust—'tis enough to turn a man's head; 'tis sickening, by George!" grumbled the little Doctor, fiercely.

"Here's a gentleman, sir," said Gamble, waving his pen towards Toole, with a chuckle, "who believes that ladies like to recover their husbands."

The fellow grew red, and grinned a sly uneasy grin, looking stealthily at Toole, who was rapidly growing angry.

"Yes, sir, and one who believes, too, that gentlemen ought to protect their wives," added the little Doctor, hotly.

"As soon as they know who they are," muttered the attorney to his papers.

"I think, gentlemen, I'm rather in your way," said Toole, with a gloomy briskness; "I think 'tis better I should go. I—I'm somewhat amazed, gentlemen, and I—I wish you a good morning."

And Toole made them a very stern bow, and walked out at the wrong door.

"This way, by your leave, Doctor," said Mr. Gamble, opening the right one; and at the head of the stairs he took Toole by the cuff, and said he—

"After all, 'tis but just the wrong Mrs. Nutter should give place to the right; and if you go down to the Mills to-morrow, you'll find she's by no means so bad as you think her."

But Toole broke away from him sulkily, with—

"I wish you a good morning, sir."

It was quite true that Sally Nutter was to hear from Charles and Mr. Gamble that morning; for about the time at which Toole was in conference with those two gentlemen in Dublin, two coaches drew up at the Mills.

Mr. Gamble's conducting gentleman was in one, and two mysterious personages sat in the other.

"I want to see Mrs. Nutter," said Mr. Gamble's emissary.

"Mrs. Nutter's in the parlour, at your service," answered the lean grinning maid who had opened the door, and who recognising in that gentleman an adherent of the enemy, had assumed her most impertinent leer and tone on the instant.

The ambassador looked in and drew back.

"Oh, then, 'tisn't the mistress you want, but the master's old housekeeper; ask *her*."

And she pointed with her thumb toward Moggy, whose head was over the banister.

So, as he followed that honest hand-maiden up

stairs, he drew from his coat-pocket a bundle of papers, and glanced at their endorsements, for he had a long exposition to make, and then some important measures to execute.

Toole had to make up for lost time; and as he rode at a smart canter into the village, he fancied he observed the signs of an unusual excitement there. There were some faces at the windows, some people on the door-steps; and a few groups in the street; they were all looking in the Dublin direction. He had a nod or two as he passed. Toole thought forthwith of Mr. David O'Reegan—people generally refer phenomena to what most concerns themselves—and a dim horror of some unknown summary process dismayed him; but his hall-door shone peaceably in the sun, and his boy stood whistling on the steps, with his hands in his pockets. Nobody had been there since, and Pell had not yet called at Sturk's.

"And what's happened—what's the neighbours lookin' after?" said Toole, as his own glance followed the general direction, so soon as he had dismounted.

"'Twas a coach that had driven through the town, at a thundering pace, with some men inside, from the Knockmaroon direction, and a lady that was screeching. She broke one of the coach windows in Martin's-row, and the other—*there*, just opposite the Phœnix." The glass was glittering on the road. "She had rings on her hand, and her knuckles were bleeding, and it was said

'twas poor Mrs. Nutter going away with the keepers to a mad-house."

Toole turned pale and ground his teeth, looking towards Dublin.

"I passed it myself near Island-bridge; I did hear screeching, but I thought 'twas from t'other side of the wall. There was a fellow in an old blue and silver coat with the driver—eh?"

"The same," said the boy; and Toole, with difficulty swallowing down his rage, hurried into his house, resolved to take Lowe's advice on the matter, and ready to swear to poor Sally's perfect sanity—"the crature!—the villains!"

But now he had only a moment to pull off his boots, to get into his grand costume, and seize his cane and his muff, too—for he sported one; and so transformed and splendid, he marched down the paved *trottoir*—Doctor Pell, happily, not yet arrived—to Sturk's house. There was a hackney coach near the steps.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN WHICH DOCTOR PELL DECLINES A FEE, AND DOCTOR STURK A PRESCRIPTION.

On entering the front parlour from whence, in no small excitement, there issued the notes of a coarse diapson, which he fancied was known to him, he found Mr. Justice Lowe in somewhat tempestuous conference with the visiter.

He was, in fact, no other than Black Dillon; black enough he looked just now. He had only a moment before returned from a barren visit to the Brass Castle, and was in no mood to be trifled with.

"'Twasn't *I*, sir, but Mr. Dangerfield, who promised you five hundred guineas," said Mr. Lowe, with a dry nonchalance.

"Five hundred fiddles," retorted Doctor Dillon—his phrase was coarser, and Toole at that moment entering the door, and divining the situation from the Doctor's famished glare and wild gestures, exploded, I'm sorry to say, in a momentary burst of laughter into his cocked hat. 'Twas instantly stifled, however; and when Dillon turned his flaming eyes upon him, the little Doctor made him a bow of superlative gravity, which the

furious hero of the trepan was too full of his wrongs to notice in any way.

"I was down at his house, bedad, the 'Brass Castle,' if you plaise, and not a brass farthin' for my pains, nothing there but an ould woman, as ould and as ugly as himself, or the divil—be gannies! An' he's levanted, or else tuck for debt, Brass Castle! brass *forehead*, bedad. Brass, like Goliah, from head to heels; an' by the heels he's laid, I'll take my davey, considherin' at his laysure which is strongest—a brass castle or a stone jug. An' where, sir, am I to get my five hundhred guineas—where, sir?" he thundered, staring first in Lowe's face, then in Toole's, and dealing the table a lusty blow at each interrogatory.

"I think, sir," said Lowe, anticipating Toole, "you'd do well to consider the sick man, sir." The noise was certainly considerable.

"I don't know, sir, that the sick man's considherin' me much," retorted Doctor Dillon. "Sick man—sick grandmother's aunt! If you can't speak like a man o' sense, *don't* spake, at any rate, like a justice o' the pace. Sick man, indeed! why there's not a crature livin' barrin' a natural eediot, or an apothecary, that doesn't know the man's dead; he's *dead*, sir; but 'tisn't so with me; an' I can't get on without vittles, and vittles isn't to be had without money; that's logic, Mr. Justice; that's a medical fact, Mr. Docthor. An' how am I to get my five hundhred guineas? I say, *you*

and *you*—the both o' ye—that prevented me of going last night to his brass castle—brass snuff-box—there is n't room to stand in it, bedad—an' gettin' my money. I hold you both liable to me—one an' 'tother—the both o' ye."

"Why, sir," said Lowe, "'tis a honorarium."

"'Tis no such thing, sir; 'tis a contract," thundered Dillon, pulling Dangerfield's note of promise from his pocket, and dealing it a mighty slap with the back of his hand.

"Contract or no, sir, there's nobody liable for it but himself."

"We'll try that, sir; and in the meantime, what the divil am I to do, I'd be glad to know; for strike me crooked if I have a crown piece to pay the coachman. Trepan, indeed; I'm nately trepanned myself."

"If you'll only listen, sir, I'll show you your case is well enough. Mr. Dangerfield, as you call him, has not left the country; and though he's arrested, 'tisn't for debt. If he owes you the money, 'tis your own fault if you don't make him pay it, for I'm credibly informed he's worth more than a hundred thousand pounds."

"And where is he, sir?" demanded Black Dillon, much more cheerfully and amicably. "I hope I see you well, Doctor Toole."

That learned person acknowledged the somewhat tardy courtesy, and Lowe made answer,

"He lies in the county gaol, sir, on a serious

criminal charge; but a line from me, sir, will, I think, gain you admission to him forthwith."

"I'll be much obliged for it, sir," answered Dillon. "What o'clock is it?" he asked of Toole; for though it is believed he owned a watch, it was sometimes not about him; and while Lowe scribbled a note, Toole asked in a dignified way—

"Have you seen our patient, sir?"

"Not I. Didn't I see him last night. The man's dead. He's in the last stage of exhaustion with an inflammatory pulse. If you feed him up he'll die of inflammation; and if you don't he'll die of wakeness. So he lies on the fatal horns of a dilemma, you see; an' not all the men in Derry 'll take him off them alive. He's gone, sir. Pell's coming, I hear. I'd wait if I could; but I must look afther business; and there's no good to be done here. I thank you, Mr. Lowe—Sir—your most obedient servant, Doctor Toole." And with Lowe's note in his breeches' pocket, he strode out to the steps, and whistled for his coachman, who drove his respectable employer tipsily to his destination.

I dare say the interview was characteristic; but I can find no account of it. I am pretty sure, however, that he did not get a shilling. So at least he stated in his declaration, in the action against Lowe, in which he, or rather his attorney, was non-suited, with grievous loss of costs. And judging by the sort of esteem in which Mr. Dangerfield held Black Dillon, I fancy that few things

would have pleased him better in his unfortunate situation than hitting that able practitioner as hard as might be.

Just as he drove away, poor little Mrs. Sturk looked in.

"Is there anything, ma'am?" asked Toole, a little uneasily.

"Only—only, I think he's just a little frightened—he's so nervous, you know—by that Dublin doctor's loud talking—and he's got a kind of trembling—a shivering."

"Eh—a shivering, ma'am?" said Toole, "Like a man that's taken a cold, eh?"

"Oh, he hasn't got cold—I'm sure—There's no danger of that. It's only nervous; so I covered him up with another pair of blankets, and gave him a hot drink."

"Very good, ma'am; I'll follow you up in a minute."

"And even if it was, you know he shakes off cold in no time, he has such a fine constitution."

"Yes, ma'am—that's true—very good, ma'am. I'll be after you."

So up stairs went Mrs. Sturk in a fuss.

"That's it," said Toole, so soon as they were alone, nodding two or three times dejectedly, and looking very glum. "It's set in—the inflammation—it's set in, sir. He's gone. That's the rigor."

"Poor gentleman," said Lowe, after a short

pause, "I'm much concerned for him, and for his family."

"'Tis a bad business," said Toole, gloomily, like a man that's frightened. And he followed Mrs. Sturk, leaving Lowe adjusting his papers in the parlour.

Toole found his patient laden with blankets, and shivering like a man in an ague, with blue, sunken face. And he slipped his hand under the clothes, and took his pulse, and said nothing but—"Ay—ay—ay"—quietly to himself, from time to time, as he did so; and Sturk—signing, as well as he could, that he wanted a word in his ear—whispered, as well as his chattering teeth would let him.

"You know what *this* is."

"Well—well—there now, there; drink some of this," said Toole, a little flurried, and trying to seem cool.

"I think he's a little bit better, Doctor," whispered poor little Mrs. Sturk, in Toole's ear.

"'Twill pass away, ma'am."

Toole was standing by the bed-side, looking rather wofully and frightened on Sturk's face, and patting and smoothing the coverlet with the palm of his stumpy, red hand; and whispering to himself from time to time, "yes, yes," although with rather a troubled and helpless air.

Just then came the roll of a coach to the door, and a long peal at the knocker; and little Toole ran down to meet the great Doctor Pell in the

hall. He was in, in a moment, and turned aside with Toole into the drawing-room. And Toole's voice was heard pretty volubly. It was only a conference of about two minutes. And Doctor Pell said in his usual *tall* way, as they came out—

"How long ago, sir?"

"About ten—no, hardly so much—*eight* minutes ago," answered Toole, as he followed that swift phantom up the stairs.

"Your most obedient, ma'am," said the slim and lofty Doctor, parenthetically, saluting the good lady; and he stood by the bed-side, having laid his muff on the chair.

"Well, sir, and how do you feel? There now, that will do, sir; don't mind speaking; *I* see. And he put his hand under the clothes, and laid it on Sturk's arm, and slid it down to his hand, and felt his pulse.

"And he's been near ten minutes this way?" said the Doctor.

"Oh, he was a great deal worse; 'tis a vast deal better now; isn't it, Doctor Toole?"

"The rigor is subsiding, then. Has he had a sweat, ma'am?" said Pell.

"Oh, no—nothing like — quite nice and cool, Doctor—and no fever; nice quiet sleep; and his appetite wonderful; tell him, Doctor Toole."

"Oh, yes, ma'am—Doctor Pell knows; I told him all ma'am," said Toole, who was looking with a blank

and dismal sort of contemplation upon Sturk's fallen countenance.

"Well, ma'am," said Pell, as he looked on his watch, "this rigor, you see, will soon pass away, and you're doing everything we could wish, and (for he found he had time to scribble a prescription,) we'll just order him a trifle. Good day, sir. Your most obedient, ma'am."

"Pen and ink in the drawing-room, Doctor Pell," said Toole, reverentially.

"Oh! no, *no*, madam, excuse me, murmured Doctor Pell, gently pressing back Mrs. Sturk's fee, the residuum of Dangerfield's bounty, with his open palm.

"Oh, but Doctor Pell," urged she, in a persuasive aside, half behind him, in the shadow of the doorway.

"Pray, madam, no more—pardon me," and Doctor Pell, with a peremptory bow, repelled his fee.

Why do physicians take their honest earnings in this clandestine way—transacted like favours, secret, sweet, and precious; and pocketted in dark corners, and whispers, like the wages of sin? Cold Doctor Pell here refused a very considerable fee. He could on occasion behave handsomely; but I can't learn that blustering, hilarious Doctor Rogerson ever refused his.

And the Doctor descended, not hastily, but very swiftly; and was in the drawing-room, and the door shut.

"Gone, poor gentleman!" said Toole, in an under tone—his phraseology became refined in Pell's presence; he'd have said "poor devil," or "poor dog," if he had been with Doctor Rogerson.

Pell held the pen in his thin lips, while he tore off half-a-sheet of paper, and only shook his head funereally.

So taking the pen in his fingers he said, "We'll give him so and so, if you approve.

"Very good, sir," said Toole, deferentially; and Pell, not seeming to hear, dashed off a few spattered lines, with necromantic circles and zigzags at the end of each.

When Sturk afterwards saw that paper in the fingers of the maid, being very weak, he did not care to speak; but he signed with a little motion of his head, and she leaned down to listen.

"Recipe?" whispered the Doctor; "put it—in—the fire;" and he shut his eyes—tired.

Pell looking again at his watch, was Doctor Toole's very obedient servant, and was waylaid by poor little Mrs. Sturk on the lobby.

"Well, madam, we've put our heads together, and ordered a little matter, and that rigor—that shivering fit—will subside; and we trust he'll be easier then; and you've a very competent adviser in Doctor a—a——"

"Toole," sugested the eager little woman.

"Doctor Toole, madam, and he'll direct what-

ever may be necessary; and should he wish to consult again, you can send for me; but he's quite compent, madam, and he'll tell you all we think."

He had got to the end of the stairs while talking, and made his adieu, and glided down and out; and before poor little Mrs. Sturk bethought her how little she had got from him, she heard the roll of his coach-wheels whirling him back again to Dublin. I believe few doctors grow so accustomed to the ghastly *eclaircissement* as not very willingly to shirk it when they may.

Toole shrank from it, too, and dodged, and equivocated, and evaded all he could; but he did admit there was an unfavourable change; and when he had gone—promising to be back at four o'clock—poor little Mrs. Sturk broke down—all alone in the drawing-room—and cried a passionate flood of tears; and thinking she was too long away, dried her eyes quickly, and ran up, and into Barney's room with a smile on; and she battled with the evil fear; and hope, that faithful angel that clings to the last, hovered near her with blessed illusions, until an hour came, next day, in the evening, about four o'clock, when from Barney's room there came a long, wild cry. It was "his poor foolish little Letty"—the long farewell—and the "noble Barney" was gone. The courtship and the married days—all a faded old story now; and a few days later, reversed arms, and

muffled drums, and three volleys in the church-yard, and a little file of wondering children, dressed in black, whom the old General aferwards took up in his arms, one by one, very kindly, and kissed, and told them they were to come and play in Belmont whenever they liked, and to eat fruit in the garden, and a great deal more; for all which a poor little lady, in a widow's cap, and a lonely room, hard-by, was very grateful.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ABOUT THE RIGHTFUL MRS. NUTTER OF THE MILLS, AND HOW MR. MERVYN RECEIVED THE NEWS.

Little Doctor Toole came out feeling rather queer and stunned from Sturk's house. It was past three o'clock by this time, and it had already, in his eyes, a changed and empty look, as his upturned eye for a moment rested upon its gray front, and the window-panes glittering in the reddening sun. He looked down the street towards the turnpike, and then up it, towards Martin's-row and the Mills. And he bethought him suddenly of poor Sally Nutter, aud upbraided himself, smiting the point of his cane with a vehement stab upon the pavement, for having forgotten to speak to Lowe upon her case. Perhaps, however, it was as well he had not, inasmuch as there were a few not unimportant facts connected with that case about which he was himself in the dark.

Mr. Gamble's conducting clerk had gone up stairs to Mistress Nutter's door, and being admitted, had very respectfully asked leave to open, for that lady's instruction, a little statement which he was charged to make.

This was in substance, that Archibald Duncan, Mary Matchwell's husband, was in Dublin, and had sworn informations against her for bigamy; and that a warrant having been issued for her arrest upon that charge, the constables had arrived at the Mills for the purpose of executing it, and removing the body of the delinquent, M. M., to the custody of the turnkey; that measures would be taken on the spot to expel the persons who had followed in her train; and that Mr. Charles Nutter himself would arrive in little more than an hour, to congratulate his good wife, Sally, on the termination of their troubles, and to take quiet pessession of his house.

You can imagine how Sally Nutter received all this, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, looking in the face of the man of notices and attested copies, unable to speak—unable quite to believe. But before he came to the end of his dry and delightful narrative, a loud yell and a scuffle in the parlour were heard; a shrilly clamour of warring voices; a dreadful crash of glass; a few curses and oaths in basses and barytones; and some laughter from the coachmen, who viewed the fray from outside through the window; and a brief, wild, and garrulous uproar, which made little Sally Nutter—though, by this time, used to commotion—draw back with her hands to her heart, and hold her breath. It was the critical convulsion; the evil spirit was being eliminated, and the

tenement stunned, bruised, and tattered, about to be at peace.

Of Charles Nutter's doings and adventures during the terrible interval between his departure on the night of Mary Matchwell's first visit to the Mills, and his return on this evening to the same abode, there is a brief outline, in the first person, partly in answer to questions, and obviously intended to constitute a memorandum for his attorney's use. I shall reprint it with your leave—as it is not very long—verbatim.

"When that woman, sir, came out to the Mills," says this document, "I could scarce believe my eyes; I knew her temper; she was always damnably wicked; but I had found out all about her long ago; and I was amazed at her audacity. What she said was true—we *were* married; or rather we went through the ceremony at St. Clement Danes, in London, in the year '50. I could not gainsay that; but I well knew what she thought was known but to herself and another. She had a husband living then. We lived together little mere than three months. We were not a year parted when I found out all about him; and I never expected more trouble from her."

"I knew all about him, then. But seventeen years bring many changes; and I feared he might be dead. He was a saddler in Edinburgh, and his name was Duncan. I made up my mind to go thither straight. Next morning the *Lovely*

Betty, packet, was to sail for Holyhead. I took money, and set out without a word to anybody. The wretch had told my poor wife, and showed her the certificate, and so left her half mad.

I swore to her 'twas false. I told her to wait a bit, and she would see. That was everything passed between us. I don't think she half understood what I said, for she was at her wits' ends. I was scarce better myself first. 'Twas a good while before I resolved on this course, and saw my way, and worse thoughts were in my head; but so soon as I made up my mind to this, I grew cool. I don't know how it happened that my foot-prints by the river puzzled them; 'twas all accident; I was thinking of no such matter; I did not go through the village, but through the Knockmaroon gate; 'twas dark by that time; I only met two men with a cart—they did not know me—Dublin men, I think. I crossed the Park in a straight line for Dublin; I did not meet a living soul; 'twas dark, but not very dark. When I reached the Butcher's Wood, all on a sudden, I heard a horrid screech, and two blows quick, one after the other, to my right, not three score steps away—heavy blows—they sounded like the strokes of a man beating a carpet."

"With the first alarm, I hollo'd, and ran in the direction, shouting as I went; 'twas as I ran heard the second blow; I saw no one, and heard no other sound; the noise I made myself in run-

ning might prevent it. I can't say how many seconds it took to run the distance—not many; I run fast; I was not long in finding the body; his white vest and small clothes showed under the shadow; he seemed quite dead. I thought when first I took his hand, there was a kind of a quiver in his fingers; but that was over immediately. His eyes and mouth were a bit open; the blood was coming very fast, and the wounds on his head looked very deep—frightful—as I conjectured they were done with a falchion, (a name given to a heavy wooden sword resembling a New Zealand weapon); there was blood coming from one ear, and his mouth; there was no sign of life about him; and I thought him quite dead. I would have lifted him against a tree, but his head looked all in a smash, and I daren't move him. I knew him for Doctor Sturk, of the Artillery; he wore his regimentals; I did not see his hat; his head was bare when I saw him.

"When I saw 'twas Doctor Sturk, I was frightened; he had treated me mighty ill, and I resented it, which I did not conceal; and I thought 'twould look very much against me if I were any way mixed up in this dreadful occurrence—especially not knowing who did it—and being alone with the body so soon after 'twas done. I crossed the Park wall, therefore; but by the time I came near Barrack-street, I grew uneasy in my mind, lest Doctor Sturk should still have life in him,

and perish for want of help. I went down to the river-side, and washed my hands, for there was blood upon 'em, and while so employed, by mischance I lost my hat in the water and could not recover it. I stood for a while by the river-bank; it was a lonely place; I was thinking of crossing there first, I was so frightened; I changed my mind, however, and went round by Bloody-bridge.

"The further I went the more fearful I grew, lest Sturk should die for want of help that I might send him; and although I thought him dead, I got such a dread of this over me as I can't describe. I saw two soldiers opposite the "Royal Oak" inn, and I told them I overheard a fellow speak of an officer that lay wounded in the Butcher's Wood, not far from the Park-wall, and gave them half-a-crown to have search made, which they promised, and took the money.

"I crossed Bloody-bridge, and got into a coach, and so to Luke Gamble's. I told him nothing of Sturk; I had talked foolishly to him, and did not know what even he might think. I told him all about M. M.'s that is Mary Duncan's turning up; she went by that name in London, and kept a lodging-house. I took his advice on the matter, and sailed next morning. The man Archie Duncan, had left Edinburgh, but I traced him to Carlisle and thence to York, where I found him. He was in a very poor way, and glad to hear that Demirep was in Dublin, and making money. When I

came back I was in the *Hue-and-Cry* for the assault on Sturk.

"I took no precaution, not knowing what had happened; but 'twas night when we arrived, Duncan and I, and we went straight to Gamble's, and he concealed me. I kept close within his house, except on one night, whent I took coach. I was under necessity, as you shall hear, to visit Chapelizod. I got out in the hollow of the road by the Knockmaroon pond, in the Park; an awful night it was—the night of the snow-storm, when the brig was wrecked off the Black Rock, you remember. I wanted to get some papers necessary to my case against Mary Duncan. I had the key of the glass door; the inside fastening was broke, and there was no trouble in getting in. But the women had sat up beyond their hour, and saw me. I got the papers, however, and returned, having warned them not to speak. I ventured out of doors but once more, and was took on a warrant for assaulting Sturk. 'Twas the women talking as they did excited the officers' suspicions.

"I have lain in prison since. The date of my commital and discharge are, I supose, there."

And so ends this rough draft, with the initials, I think, in his own hand, C. N., at the foot.

At about half-past four o'clock Nutter came out to the Mills in a coach. He did not drive through Chapelizod; he was shy, and wished to feel his way a little. So he came home privily by the

Knockmaroon Park-Gate. Poor little Sally rose into a sort of heroine. With a wild cry, and "Oh, Charlie!" she threw her arms about his neck; and the "good little crayture," as Magnolia was wont to call her, had fainted. Nutter said nothing, but carried her in his arms to the sofa, and himself sobbed very violently for about a minute, supporting her tenderly. She came to herself very quickly, and hugged her Charlie with such a torrent of incoherent endearments, welcomes, and benedictions as I cannot at all undertake to describe. Nutter didn't speak. His arms were about her, and with wet eyes, and biting his nether-lip, and smiling, he looked into her poor little wild, delighted face with an unspeakable world of emotion and affection beaming from the homely lines and knots of that old mahogany countenance; and the maids smiling, blessing, courteseying, and welcoming him home again, added to the pleasant uproar which amazed even the tipsy coachman from the hall.

"Oh! Charlie, I have you fast, my darling. Oh! but it's wonderful; you, yourself—my Charlie, your own self—never, never, oh! *never* to part again!" and so on.

And so for a rapturous hour, it seemed as if they had passed the dark valley, and were immortal; and no more pain, sorrow, or separation for them. And, perhaps, these blessed illusions are permitted now and again to mortals, like momen-

tary gleams of paradise, and distant views of the delectable mountains, to cheer poor pilgrims with a foretaste of those meetings beyond the river, where the separated and beloved shall embrace.

It is not always that the person most interested in a rumour is first to hear it. It was reported in Chapelizod, early that day, that Irons, the clerk, had made some marvellous discovery respecting Lord Dunoran, and the murder of which an English jury had found that nobleman guilty. Had people known that Mervyn was the son of that dishonoured peer—as in that curious little town they would, no doubt, long since have, at least, suspected, had he called himself by his proper patronymic, Mordaunt—he would not have wanted a visiter to enlighten him half an hour after the rumour had begun to proclaim itself in the streets and public haunts of the village. No one, however, thought of the haughty and secluded young gentleman who lived so ascetic a life at the Tiled House, and hardly ever showed in the town, except in church on Sundays; and who when he rode on his black hunter into Dublin, avoided the village, and took the high-road by Inchicore.

When the report did reach him, and he heard that Lowe, who knew all about it, was at the Phœnix, where he was holding a conference with a gentleman from the Crown Office, half wild with excitement, he hurried thither. There, having declared himself to the magistrate and his com-

panion, in that little chamber where Nutter was wont to transact his agency business, and where poor Sturk had told down his rent, guinea by guinea, with such a furious elation, on the morning but one before he received his death-blow, he heard, with such feelings as may be imagined, the magistrate read aloud, not only the full and clear information of Irons, but the equally distinct deposition of Doctor Sturk, and was made aware of the complete identification of the respectable and vivacious Paul Dangerfield with the dead and damned Charles Archer!

On hearing all this, the young man rode straight to Belmont, where he was closetted with the General for fully twenty minutes. They parted in a very friendly way, but he did not see the ladies. The General, however, no sooner bid him farewell at the door-steps than he made his way to the drawing-room, and, big with his amazing secret, first, in a very grave and almost agitated way, told Little "Toodie," as he called his daughter, to run away and leave him together with Aunt Rebecca, which being done, he anticipated that lady's imperious summons to explain himself by telling her, in his blunt, soldierly fashion, the wondrous story.

Aunt Becky was utterly confounded. She had seldom before in her life been so thoroughly taken in. What a marvellous turn of fortune! What a providential deliverance and vindication for

that poor young Lord Dunoran! What an astounding exposure of that miscreant, Mr. Dangerfield!

"What a blessed escape the child has had!" interposed the General, with a rather testy burst of gratitude.

"And how artfully she and my Lord contrived to conceal their engagement!" pursued Aunt Rebecca, covering her somewhat confused retreat.

But, somehow, Aunt Rebecca was by no means angry. On the contrary, any one who knew her well would have perceived that a great weight was taken off her mind.

The consequences of Dangerfield's incarceration upon these awful charges, were not confined altogether to the Tiled House and the inhabitants of Belmont.

No sooner was our friend Cluffe well assured that Dangerfield was in custody of the gaoler, and that his old theory of a certain double plot carried on by that intriguing personage, with the object of possessing the hand and thousands of Aunt Rebecca, was now and for ever untenable, than he wrote to London forthwith to countermand the pelican. The answer, which in those days was rather long about coming, was not pleasant, being simply a refusal to rescind the contract.

Cluffe, in a frenzy, carried this piece of mercantile insolence off to his lawyer. The stout Captain was, however, undoubtedly liable, and, with

a heavy heart, he wrote to beg they would, with all despatch, sell the bird in London on his account, and charge him with the difference. "The scoundrels!—they'll buy him themselves at half-price, and charge me a per centage besides; but what the plague better can I do?"

In due course, however, came an answer, informing Captain Cluffe that his letter had arrived too late, as the bird, pursuant to the tenor of his order, had been shipped for him to Dublin by the *Fair Venus*, with a proper person in charge, on the Thursday morning previous. Good Mrs. Mason, his landlady, had no idea what was causing the awful commotion in the Captain's room; the fitful and violent soliloquies; the stamping of the Captain up and down the floor; and the contusions, palbably, suffered by her furniture. The Captain's temper was not very pleasant that evening, and he was fidgetty and feverish besides, expecting every moment a note from town to apprise him of its arrival.

However, he walked up to Belmont a week or two after, and had a very consolatory reception from Aunt Becky. He talked upon his old themes, and upon the subject of Puddock, was, as usual, very friendly and intercessorial; in fact, she showed at last signs of yielding.

"Well, Captain Cluffe, tell him if he cares to come, he *may* come, and be on the old friendly footing; but be sure you tell him he owes it all to *you*."

And positively, as she said so, Aunt Rebceca looked down upon her fan; and Cluffe thought, looked a little flushed, and confused too; whereat the gallant fellow was so elated that he told her all about the pelican, discarding as unworthy of consideration, under circumstances so imminently promising, a little plan he had formed of keeping the bird privately in Dublin, and looking out for a buyer.

Poor little Puddock, on the other hand, had heard, more than a week before this message of peace arrived, the whole story of Gertrude's engagement to Lord Dunoran, as we may now call Mr. Mervyn, with such sensations as may be conjectured. His heart, of course, was torn; but having sustained some score of similar injuries in that region upon other equally harrowing occasions, he recovered upon this with all favourable symptoms, and his wounds healed with the first intention. He wore his chains very lightly, indeed. The iron did not enter into his soul; and although, of course, "he could never cease but with his life to dwell upon the image of his fleeting dream—the beautiful nymph of Belmont," I have never heard that his waist grew at all slimmer, or that his sleep or his appetite suffered during the period of his despair.

The good little fellow was very glad to hear from Cluffe, who patronised him most handsomely,

that Aunt Rebecca had consented to receive him once more into her good graces.

"And the fact is, Puddock, I think I may undertake, to promise you'll never again be misunderstood in that quarter," said Cluffe, with a mysterious sort of smile.

"I'm sure, dear Cluffe, I'm grateful as I ought, for your generous pleading on my poor behalf, and I do prize the good will of that most excellent lady as highly as any, and owe her, beside, a debt of gratitude for care and kindness such as many a mother would have failed to bestow."

"Mother, indeed! Why, Puddock, my boy, you forget you're no chicken, said Cluffe, a little high.

"And to-morrow I will certainly pay her my respects," said the Lieutenant, not answering Cluffe's remark.

So Gertrude Chattesworth, after her long agitation—often despair—was tranquil at last, and blessed in the full assurance of the love which was henceforth to be her chief earthly happiness.

"Madam was very sly," said Aunt Becky, with a little shake of her head, and a quizzical smile; and holding up her folded fan between her finger and thumb, in mimic menace as she glanced at Gertrude. "Why, Mr. Mordaunt, on the very day—the day we had the pleasant luncheon on the grass—when, as I thought, she had given you your quietus—'twas quite the reverse, and you

had made a little betrothal, and duped the old people so cleverly ever after."

"You have forgiven me, dear Aunt," said the young lady, kissing her very affectionately, "but I will never quite forgive myself. In a moment of great agitation I made a hasty promise of secrecy, which, from the moment 'twas made, was to me a never-resting disquietude, misery, and reproach. If you, my dearest aunt, knew, as *he* knows, all the anxieties, or rather the terrors, I suffered during that agitating period of concealment"——

"Indeed, dear madam," said Mordaunt—or as we may now call him, Lord Dunoran—coming to the rescue, "'twas all my doing; on me alone rests all the blame. Selfish it hardly was. I could not risk the loss of my beloved; and until my fortunes had improved, to declare our situation would have been too surely to lose her. Henceforward I have done with mystery. *I* will never have a secret from her, nor she from you."

He took Aunt Becky's hand; "Am I, too, forgiven?"

He held it for a second, and then kissed it.

Aunt Becky smiled, with one of her pleasant little blushes, and looked down on the carpet, and was silent for a moment; and then, as they afterwards thought a little oddly, she said,

"That censor must be more severe than I, who would say that concealment in matters of the heart

is never justifiable; and, indeed, my dears," she added quite in an humble way, "I almost think you were right."

Aunt Becky's looks and spirits had both improved from the moment of this *eclaircissement.* A load was plainly removed from her mind. Let us hope that her comfort and elation were perfectly unselfish. At all events, her heart sang with a quiet joy, and her good humour was unbounded. So she stood up, holding Lord Dunoran's hand in hers, and putting her white arm round her niece's neck, she kissed her again and again, very tenderly, and she said—

"How very happy, Gertrude, you must be?" and then she went quickly from the room, drying her eyes.

Happy indeed she was, and not least in the termination of that secrecy which was so full of self-reproach, and sometimes of distrust. From the evening of that dinner at the King's House, when in an agony of jealousy, she had almost disclosed to poor little Lily, the secret of their engagement; down to the latest moment of its concealment, her hours had been darkened by care, and troubled with ceaseless agitations.

Everything was now going prosperously for Mervyn—or let us call him henceforward Lord Dunoran. Against the united evidence of Sturk and Irons, two independent witnesses, the Crown were of opinion that no defence was maintainable

by the wretch, Archer. The two murders were unambiguously sworn to by both witnesses. A correspondence, afterwards read in the Irish House of Lords, was carried on between the Irish and the English law officers of the Crown—for the case, for many reasons, was admitted to be momentous—as to which crime he should be first tried for—the murder of Sturk, or that of Beauclerc. The latter was, in this respect, the most momentous—that the cancelling of the forfeiture which had ruined the Dunoran family depended upon it.

"But are you not forgetting, sir," said Mr. Attorney in consultation, "that there's the finding of *felo de se* against him by the coroner's jury?"

"No, sir," answered the Crown Solicitor, well pleased to set Mr. Attorney right. "The jury being sworn, found only that he came by his death, but whether by gout in his stomach, or by other disease, or by poison, they had no certain knowledge; there was therefore no such coroner's verdict, and no forfeiture therefore."

"And I'm glad to hear it, with all my heart. I've seen the young gentleman, and a very pretty young nobleman he is," said Mr. Attorney. Perhaps he would not have cared if this expression of his good will had got round to my Lord.

The result was, however, that their prisoner was to be first tried in Ireland for the murder of Doctor Barnabas Sturk.

A few pieces of evidence, slight, but sinister, also turned up. Captain Cluffe was quite clear he had seen an instrument in the prisoner's hand on the night of the murder, as he looked into the little bedchamber of the Brass Castle, so unexpectedly. When he put down the towel, he raised it from the toilet, where it lay. It resembled the but of a whip—was an inch or so longer than a drumstick, and six or seven inches of the thick end stood out in a series of circular bands or rings. He rinsed the thick end of it in the basin; it seemed to have a spring in it, and Cluffe thought it was a sort of loaded baton. In those days robbery and assault were as common as they are like to become again, and there was nothing remarkable in the possession of such defensive weapons. Dangerfield had only run it once or twice hastily through the water, rolled it in a red handkerchief, and threw it into his drawer, which he locked. When Cluffe was shown the whip, which bore a rude resemblance to this instrument, and which Lowe had assumed to be all that Cluffe had really seen, the gallant Captain peremptorily pooh-poohed it. 'Twas no such thing. The whip-handle was light in comparison, and it was too long to fit in the drawer.

Now, the awful fractures which had almost severed Sturk's skull corresponded exactly with the wounds which such an instrument would in-

flict, and a tubular piece of broken iron, about two inches long, exactly corresponding with the shape of the loading described by Cluffe, was actually discovered in the sewer of the Brass Castle. It had been in the fire, and the wood or whalebone, was burnt completely away. It was conjectured that Dangerfield had believed it to be lead, and having burnt the handle, had broken the metal which he could not melt, and made away with it in the best way he could.

So preparations were pushed forward, and Sturk's dying declaration, sworn to, late in the evening before his dissolution, in a full consciousness of his appoaching death, was, of course, relied on, and a very symmetrical and logical bill lay, neatly penned, in the Crown Office, awaiting the next commission for the county.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH OBEDIAH ARRIVES.

In the meantime, our worthy little Lieutenant Puddock—by this time quite reconciled to the new state of things, walked up to Belmont, with his head a great deal fuller—such and so great are human vagaries—of the interview pending between him and Aunt Becky than of the little romance which had exploded so unexpectedly about a fortnight ago.

He actually saw Miss Gertrude and my Lord Dunoran walking side by side, on the mulberry walk by the river; and though he looked and felt a little queer, perhaps, a little absurd, he did not sigh, nor murmur a stanza, nor suffer a palpitation; but walked up to the hall-door, and asked for Miss Rebecca Chattesworth.

Aunt Becky received him in the drawing-room. She was looking very pale, and spoke very little, and very gently for her. In a reconciliation between two persons of the opposite sexes—though the ages be wide apart—there is almost always some little ingredient of sentiment.

The door was shut, and Puddock's voice was heard in an indistinct murmur, upon the lobby.

Then there was a silence, or, possibly, some speaking in a still lower key. Then Aunt Becky was crying, and the Lieutenant's voice cooing through it. Then Aunt Becky, still crying, said—

"A longer time than *you* think for, Lieutenant; two years, and more—*always*." And the Lieutenant's voice rose again; and she said—"What a fool I've been;" which was again lost in Puddocks accents; and the drawing-room door opened, and Aunt Rebecca ran up stairs, with her handkerchief to her red nose and eyes, and slammed her bedroom door after her like a boarding-school miss.

And the General's voice was heard shouting "luncheon" in the hall; and Dominick told Puddock, who stood, unusually pale and very much stunned, with the handle of the open drawing-room door in his hand, looking up toward the bed-room in an undecided sort of way, as if he was not clear whether it was not his duty to follow Aunt Becky. On being told a second time, however, that the General awaited him at luncheon, he seemed to apprehend the meaning of the message, and went down to the parlour forthwith.

The General, and my Lord Dunoran, and Miss Gertrude, and honest Father Roach, were there; and Aunt Becky, being otherwise engaged, could not come.

Puddock, at luncheon, was abstracted—frightened—silent, for the most part; talking only only two or three sentences during that sociable

meal, by fits and starts; and he laughed once abruptly at a joke he did not hear. He also, drank three glasses of port.

Aunt Rebecca met him with her hood on in the hall. She asked him, with a faltering sort of carelessness, looking very hard at the clock, and nearly with her back to him—

"Lieutenant, will you take a turn in the garden with me?"

To which Puddock, with almost a start—for he had not seen her till she spoke—and, upon my word, 'tis a fact, with a blush, too—made a sudden smile, and a bow, and a suitable reply in low tones; and forth they sallied together, and into the garden, and up and down the same walk, for a good while—a long while—people sometimes don't count the minutes—with none but Peter Brian, the gardener, whom they did not see, to observe them.

When they came to the white wicket-door of the garden, Aunt Rebecca hastily dropped his arm, on which she had leaned; and together they returned to the house very affably; and there Aunt Becky bid him good-bye in a whisper, a little hastily; and Puddock, so soon as he found Dominick, asked for the General.

He had gone down to the river; and Puddock followed. As he walked along the court, he looked up; there was a kind of face at the window. He smiled a great deal and raised his hat,

and placed it to his heart, and felt quite bewildered, like a man in a dream; and in this state he marched down to the river's bank.

They had not been together for a full minute when the stout General threw back his head, looking straight in his face; and then he stepped first one, then another, fat little pace backward, and poked his cane right at the ribs of the plump little Lieutenant, then closing with him, he shook both Puddock's hands in both his, with a hearty peal of laughter.

Then he takes Puddock under his arm. Puddock has to stoop to pick up his hat which the General had dislodged. And so the General walks him slowly towards the house; sometimes jogging his elbow a little under his ribs; sometimes calling a halt and taking his collar in his finger and thumb, thrusting him out a little, and eyeing him over with a sort of swagger, and laughing and coughing, and whooping, and laughing again, almost to strangulation; and altogether extraordinarily boisterous, and hilarious, and familiar, as Cluffe thought, who viewed this spectacle from the avenue.

Mr. Sterling would not have been quite so amused at a similar freak of Mrs. Hidleberg's—but our honest General was no especial worshipper of money—he was rich too, and his daughter well dowered, was about to marry a Peer, and beside all this, though he loved "Sister

Becky," her yoke galled him; and I think he was not altogether sorry at the notion of a little more liberty.

At the same moment honest Peter Brien, having set his basket of winter greens down upon the kitchen-table, electrified his auditory by telling them, with a broad grin and an oath, that he had seen Lieutenant Puddock and Aunt Rebecca kiss in the garden, with a good smart smack, "by the powers, within three yards of his elbow, when he was stooping down cutting them greens!" At which profanity, old Mistress Dorothy, Aunt Rebecca's maid, was so incensed that she rose and left the kitcken without a word. The sensation there, however, was immense; and Mistress Dorothy heard the gabble and laughter fast and furious behind her until she reached the hall.

Captain Cluffe was asking for Aunt Rebecca when Puddock and the General reached the hall-door, and was surprised to learn that she was not to be seen. "If she knew 'twas I," he thought; "but no matter."

"Oh, *we* could have told you that; eh, Puddock?" cried the General; "'tisn't everybody can see my sister to-day, Captain; a very peculiar engagement, eh, Puddock?" and a sly wink and a chuckle.

Cluffe smiled a little, and looked rather conscious and queer, but pleased with himself; and his eyes wandered over the front windows hastily,

to see if Aunt Becky was looking out, for he fancied there was something in the General's quizzing, and that the lady might have said more than she quite intended to poor little Puddock on the subject of the gallant mediator; and that, in fact, he was somehow the theme of some little sentimental disclosure of the lady's. What the plague else could they both mean by quizzing Cluffe about her?

Puddodk and he had not gone half-way down the short avenue, when Cluffe said, with a sheepish smile,

"Miss Rebecca Chattesworth dropt something in her talk with you, Puddock, I see that plain enough, my dear fellow, which the General has no objection I should hear, and, hang it, I don't see any myself. I say, I may as well hear it, eh? I venture to say there's no great harm in it."

At first Puddock was reserved, but recollecting that he had been left quite free to tell whom he pleased, he made up his mind to unbosom; and suggested, for the sake of quiet and a longer conversation, that they should go round by the ferry.

"No, I thank you, I've had enough of that; we can walk along as quietly as you like, and turn a little back again if need be."

So slowly, side by side, the brother-officers paced toward the bridge; and little Puddock, with a serious countenance and blushing cheeks,

and looking straight before him, made his astounding disclosure.

Puddock told things in a very simple and intelligible way, and Cluffe heard him in total silence; and just as he related the crowning fact, that he, the Lieutenant, was about to marry Miss Rebecca Chattesworth, having reached the milestone by the footpath, Captain Cluffe raised his foot thereupon, without a word to Puddock, and began tugging at the strap of his legging, with a dismal red grin, and a few spluttering curses at the artificer of the article.

"And the lady has had the condescension to say that she has liked me for at least *two years*."

"And she hating you like poison, to my certain knowledge," laughed Captain Cluffe, very angrily, and swallowing down something. So they walked on a little way in silence, and Cluffe, who, with his face very red, and his mouth a good deal expanded, and down in the corners, was looking steadfastly forward, exclaimed suddenly—

"*Well?*"

"I see, Cluffe," said Puddock; "you don't think it prudent—you think we mayn't be happy?"

"*Prudent!*" laughed Cluffe, with a variety of unpleasant meanings; and after a while—"And the General knows of it?"

"And approves it most kindly," said Puddock.

"What else can he do?" sneered Cluffe; "'tis a precious fancy—they *are* such cheats? Why

you might be almost her *grand*-son, my dear Puddock, ha, ha, ha. 'Tis preposterous; you're sixteen years younger than I."

"If you can't congratulate me, 'twould be kinder not to say anything, Captain Cluffe; and nobody must speak in my presence of that lady but with proper respect; and I—I thought, Cluffe, you'd have wished me well, and shaken hands, and said something—something—"

"Oh, as for that," said Cluffe, swallowing down his emotions again, and shaking hands with Puddock rather clumsily, and trying to smile, "I wish you well, heaven knows—everything good; why shouldn't I, by George? You know, Puddock, 'twas I who brought you together. And—and—am I at liberty to mention it?"

Puddock thought it better the news should be proclaimed from Belmont.

"Well, so I think myself," said Cluffe, and relapsed into silence till they parted, at the corner of the broad street of Chapelizod; and Cluffe walked at an astounding pace, on to his lodgings.

"Here's Captain Cluffe," said Mrs. Mason, to a plump youth, who had just made the journey from London, and was standing with the driver of a low-backed car, and saluted the Captain, who was stalking in without taking any notice.

"Little bill, if you please, Captain."

"What is it?" demanded the Captain, grimly.

"Obediar's come, sir."

"Obediar!" said the Captain. "What the plague do you mean, sir?"

"Obediar, sir, is the name we give him. The pelican, sir, from Messrs. Hamburgh and Slighe."

And the young man threw back a piece of green baize, and disclosed Obediah, who blinked with a tranquil countenance upon the Captain through the wires of a strong wooden cage. I doubt if the Captain ever looked so angry before or since. He glared at the pelican, and ground his teeth, and actually shook his cane in his fist; and if he had been one bit less prudent than he was, I think Obediar would then and there have slept with his fathers.

Cluffe whisked himself about, and plucked open the paper.

"And what the devil is all this for, sir? ten—twelve pounds ten shillings freightage and care on the way—and twenty-five, by George, sir—not far from forty pounds, sir," roared Cluffe.

"Where'll I bring him to, sir?" asked the driver.

The Captain bellowed an address we shan't print here.

"Curse him—curse the brute; forty pounds! and the Captain swore hugely, "you scoundrel. Drive the whole concern out of that, sir. Drive him away, sir, or, by Jove, I'll break every bone in your body, sir."

And the Captain scaled the stairs, and sat down

panting, and outside the window he heard the driver advising something about putting the Captain's bird to livery "till sich time as he'd come to his sinses;" and himself undertaking to wait opposite the door of his lodgings until his fare from Dublin was paid.

Though Cluffe was occasionally swayed by the angry passions, he was, on the whole, in his own small way, a long-headed fellow. He hated law, especially when he had a bad case; and accordingly he went down again, rumpling the confounded bill in his hand, and told the man that he did not blame *him* for it—though the whole thing was an imposition; but that rather than have any words about it, he'd pay the account, and have done with it; and he stared again in the face of the pelican with an expression of rooted abhorrence and disgust, and the mild bird clapped its bill, perhaps, expecting some refreshment, and looking upon the Captain with a serene complacency, very provoking under the circumstances.

"How the devil people can like such misshapen, idiotic-looking, selfish, useless brutes; and, by George, it smells like a pole-cat—curse it; but some people have deuced queer fancies in more matters than one. The brute! on my soul, I'd like to shoot it."

However, with plenty of disputation over the items, and many oaths and vows, the gallant Captain, with a heavy and wrathful heart, paid the

bill; and although he had sworn in his drawing-room that he'd eat the pellican before Aunt Rebecca should have it, he thought better also upon this point too, and it arrived that evening, at Belmont, with his respectful compliments.

Cluffe was soon of opinion that he was in absolute possession of his own secret, and resolved to keep it effectually. He hinted that very evening at mess, and afterwards at the club, that he had been managing a very nice and delicate bit of diplomacy, which not a soul of them suspected, at Belmont; and that, by George, he thought they'd stare when they heard it. He had worked like a lord chancellor to bring it about; and he thought all was pretty well settled, now. And the Chapelizod folk, in general, and Puddock, as implicitly as any, and Aunt Rebecca, for that matter, also believed to their dying day that Cluffe had managed that match, and been a true friend to little Puddock.

Cluffe never married, but grew confoundedly corpulent by degrees, and suffered plaguily from gout; but was always well dressed, and courageously buckled in, and, I dare say, two inches less in girth, thanks to the application of mechanics, than nature would have presented him.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH CHARLES ARCHER PUTS HIMSELF UPON THE COUNTRY.

THE excitement was high in Chapelizod when the news reached that a true bill was found against Charles Archer for the murder of Barnabas Sturk. Everywhere, indeed, the case was watched with uncommon interest; and when the decisive day arrived, and the old Judge, furrowed, yellow, and cross, mounted the bench, and the jury were called over, and the challenges began, and the grim, gentlemanlike person with the white hair, and his right arm in a black silk sling, whispering to his attorney and now and again pencilling, with his left hand, a line to his counsel with that indescribable air of confidence and almost defiance, pleaded to the indictment "not guilty," and the dreadful business of the day began, the Court was crowded as it seldom had been before.

A short, clear, horrible statement unfolded the case for the Crown. Then the dying deposition of Sturk was put in evidence; then Irons, the clerk, was put up, and told his tale doggedly and distinctly, and was not to be shaken. "No, it was not true that he had ever been confined in a mad-

house." "He had never had delirium tremens." "He had never heard that his wife thought him mad." "Yes, it was true he had pledged silver of his master's at the Pied Horse at Newmarket." "He knew it was a felony, but it was the prisoner who put it into his head and encouraged him to do it." "Yes, he would swear to that." "He had several times spoken to Lord Dunoran, when passing under the name of Mervyn, on the subject of his father being wronged." "He never had any promise from my Lord, in case he should fix the guilt of that murder on some other than his father." Our friend, Captain Cluffe was called, and delivered his evidence in a somewhat bluff and peremptory, but on the whole effective way.

Charles Nutter, after some whispered consultation, was also called, and related what we have heard. "Yes, he had been arrested for the murder of Doctor Sturk, and now stood out on bail to answer that charge." Then followed some circumstances, one of which, the discovery of a piece of what was presumed to be the weapon with which the murder was perpetrated, I have already mentioned. Then came some evidence, curious but quite clear, to show that the Charles Archer who had died at Florence, was *not* the Charles Archer who had murdered Beauclerc, but a gentleman who had served in the army, and had afterwards been for two years in Italy, in the employment of a London firm who dealt in works

of art, and was actually resident in *Italy* at the time when the Newmarket murder occurred, and that the attempt to represent him as the person who had given evidence against the late Lord Dunoran was an elaborate and cunning contrivance of the prisoner at the bar. Then came the medical evidence.

Pell was examined, and delivered only half a dozen learned sentences; Toole, more at length, made a damaging comparison of the fragment of iron already mentioned, and the outline of the fractures in the deceased man's head; and Dillon was questioned generally, and was not cross-examined. Then came the defence.

The points were, that Sturk was restored to speech by the determined interposition of the prisoner at the bar, an unlikely thing if he was ruining himself thereby! That Sturk's brain had been shattered, and not cleared from hallucinations before he died; that having uttered the monstrous dream, in all its parts incredible, which was the sole foundation of the indictment against that every way respectable and eminent gentleman who stood there, the clerk, Irons, having heard something of it, had conceived the plan of swearing to the same story, for the manifest purpose of securing thereby the favour of the young Lord Dunoran, with whom he had been in conference upon this very subject without ever once having hinted a syllable against Mr. Paul Dangerfield un-

til after Doctor Sturk's dream had been divulged; and the idea of fixing the guilt of Beauclerc's murder upon that gentleman of wealth, family, and station, occurred to his intriguing, and unscrupulous mind.

Mr. Dangerfield, in the dock nodded sometimes, or sneered or smirked with hollow cheeks, or shook his head in unison with the passing sentiment of the speaker, directing, through that hot atmosphere, now darkening into twilight, a quick glance from time to time upon the aspect of the jury, the weather-gauge of his fate, but altogether with a firm, manly, and sarcastic, and at times a somewhat offended air, as though he should say, "'tis somewhat too good a jest that I, Paul Dangerfield, Esq., a man of fashion, with my known character, and worth nigh two hundred thousand pounds sterling, should stand here, charged with murdering a miserable Chapelizod doctor!" The minutes had stolen away; the Judge read his notes by candle-light, and charged, with dry and cranky emphasis, dead against that man of integrity, fashion, and guineas; and did not appear a bit disturbed at the idea of hanging him.

When the jury went in he had some soup upon the bench, and sipped it with a great noise. Mr. Dangerfield shook hands with his counsel, and smirked and whispered. Many people there felt queer, and grew pale in the suspense, and the

general gaze was fixed upon the prisoner with a coarse curiosity, of which he seemed resolutely unconscious; and five minutes passed by, and a minute or two more—it seemed a very long time—the minute-hands of the watches hardly got on at all—and then the door of the jury-room opened, and the gentlemen came stumbling in, taking off their hats, and silence was called. There was no need; and the foreman, with a very pale and frightened face, handed down the paper.

And the simple message sounded through the court—

"Guilty!"

And Mr. Dangerfield bowed, and lifted up a white, smiling countenance, all over shining now with a slight moisture.

Then there was some whispering among the conductors of the prosecution; and the leader stood up to say, that, in consequence of a communication from the law officers in England, where the prisoner was to be arraigned on a capital indictment, involving serious consequences to others—for the murder, he meant, of Mr. Beauclerc—the Crown wished that he should stand over for judgment until certain steps in that case had been taken at the other side. Then the Court inquired whether they had considered so and so; and the leader explained and satisfied his lordship, who made an order accordingly. And Mr. Dangerfield made a low bow, with a smirk, to his lordship, and a nod,

with the same, to his counsel; and he turned, and the turnkey and darkness received him.

Mr. Dangerfield, or shall we say the villain, Charles Archer, with characteristic promptitude and coolness, availed himself of the interval to try every influence he could once have set in motion, and as it were to gather his strength for a mighty tussle with the king of terrors, when his pale fingers should tap at his cell-door. I have seen two of his letters, written with consummate plausibility and adroitness, and which have given me altogether a very high idea of his powers. But they were all received with a terrifying coldness or with absolute silence. There was no reasoning against an intuition. Every human being felt that the verdict was true, and that the judgment, when it came, would be right; and recoiled from the smiling gentleman, over whose white head the hempen circle hung like a diabolic glory. Dangerfield, who had something of the Napoleonic faculty of never "making pictures" to himself, saw this fact in its literality, and acquiesced in it.

He was a great favourite with the gaoler, whom, so long as he had the command of his money, he had treated with a frank and convivial magnificence, and who often sat up to one o'clock with him, and enjoyed his stories prodigiously, for the sarcastic man of the world lost none of his amusing qualities; and—the fatigues of his barren corre-

spondence ended—slept, and eat, and drank, pretty much as usual.

This Giant Despair, who carried the keys at his girdle, did not often get so swell a pilgrim into his castle, and was secretly flattered by his familiarity, and cheered by his devilish gaiety, and was quite willing to make rules bend a little, and the place as pleasant as possible to his distinguished guest, and give him, in fact, all his heart could desire, except a chance of escape.

"I've one move left—nothing very excellent—but sometimes, you know, a scurvy card enough will win the trick. Between you and me, my good friend, I have a thing to tell that 'twill oblige my Lord Dunoran very much to hear. My Lord Townshend will want his vote. He means to prove his peerage immediately, and he may give a poor devil a lift, you see—hey?"

So next day there came my Lord Dunoran and a magistrate, not Mr. Lowe—Mr. Dangerfield professed a contempt for him, and preferred any other. So it was Mr. Armstrong this time, and that is all I know of him.

Lord Dunoran was more pale than usual; indeed he felt like to faint on coming into the presence of the man who had made his life so indescribably miserable, and throughout the interview he scarcely spoke six sentences, and not one word of reproach. The villain was down. It was enough.

Mr. Dangerfield was, perhaps, a little excited.

He talked more volubly than usual, and once or twice there came a little flush over his pallid forehead and temples. But, on the whole, he was very much the same, brisk, sardonic talker and polite gentleman whom Mr. Mervyn had so often discoursed with in Chapelizod. On this occasion, his narrative ran on uninterruptedly and easily, but full of horrors, like a satanic reverie.

"Upon my honour, sir," said Paul Dangerfield, with his head erect, "I bear Mr. Lowe no ill-will. He is, you'll excuse me, a thief-catcher by nature. He can't help it. He thinks he works from duty, public spirit, and other fine influences; I know it is simply from an irrepressible instinct. I do assure you, I never yet bore any man the least ill-will. I've had to remove two or three, not because I hated them—I did not care a button for any—but because their existence was incompatible with my safety, which, sir, is the first thing to me, as yours is to you. Human laws we respect—ha, ha!—you and I, because they subserve our convenience, and just so long. When they tend to our destruction, 'tis, of course, another thing."

This, it must be allowed, was frank enough; there was no bargain here; and whatever Mr. Dangerfield's plan might have been, it certainly did not involve making terms with Lord Dunoran beforehand, or palliating or disguising what he had done. So on he went.

"I believe in luck, sir, and there's the sum of my credo. I was wrong in taking that money from Beauclerc *when* I did, 'twas in the midst of a dismal run of ill-fortune. There was nothing unfair in taking it, though. The man was a cheat. It was not really his, and no one could tell to whom it belonged; 'twas no more his because I had found it in his pocket than if I had found it in a barrel on the high seas. I killed him to prevent his killing me. Precisely the same motive, though in your case neither so reasonable nor so justifiable, as that on which, in the name of justice, which means only the collective selfishness of my fellow-creatures, you design in cool blood to put me publicly to death. 'Tis only that you, gentlemen, think it contributes to your safety. That's the spirit of human laws. I applaud and I adopt it in my own case. Pray, sir," (to Mr. Armstrong), "do me the honour to try this snuff, 'tis real French rappee."

"But, sir, though I have had to do these things, which you or any other man of nerve would do with a sufficient motive, I never hurt any man without a necessity for it. My money I've made fairly, though in great measure by play, and no man can say I ever promised that which I did not perform. 'Tis quite true I killed Beauclerc in the manner described by Irons. That was put upon me, and I could not help it. I did right. 'Tis also true, I killed that scoundrel Glascock, as

Irons related. Shortly after, being in trouble about money, and in danger of arrest, I went abroad, and changed my name and disguised my person.

"At Florence I was surprised to find a letter directed to Charles Archer. You may suppose it was not agreeable. But, of course, I would not claim it; and it went after all to him for whom it was intended. There was actually there a Mr. Charles Archer, dying of a decline. Three respectable English residents had made his acquaintance, knowing nothing of him, but that he was a sick countryman. When I learned all about it, I, too, got an introduction to him; and when he died, I prevailed with one of them to send a note signed by himself and two more to the London lawyer who was pursuing me, simply stating that Charles Archer had died in Florence, to their knowledge, they having seen him during his last illness, and attended his funeral.

"I told them that he had begged me to see this done, as family affairs made it necessary; 'twas as well to use the event—and they did it without difficulty. I do not know how the obituary announcement got into the newspapers,—it was not my doing—and naming him as the evidence in the prosecution of my Lord Dunoran was a great risk, and challenged contradiction, but none came. Sir Philip Drayton was one of the signatures, and it satisfied the attorney.

"When I came to Chapelizod, though, I soon found that the devil had not done with me, and that I was like to have some more unpleasant work on my hands. I did not know that Irons was above ground, nor he either that I was living. We had wandered far enough asunder in the interval to make the chances very many we should never meet again. Yet here we met, and I knew him, and he me. But he's a nervous man, and whimsical.

"He was afraid of me, and never used his secret to force money from me. Still it was not pleasant. I did not know but that if I went away he might tell it. I weighed the matter; 'tis true I thought there might have come a necessity to deal with him; but I would not engage in anything of the sort, without an absolute necessity. But Doctor Sturk was different—a bull-headed, conceited fool. I thought I remembered his face at Newmarket, and, changed as it was, I was right, and learned all about him from Irons. I saw his mind was at work on me, though he could not find me out, and I could not well know what course a man like that might take, or how much he might have seen or remembered. That was not pleasant neither.

"I had taken a whim to marry; there's no need to mention names; but I supposed I should have met no difficulty with the lady—relying on my

wealth. Had I married, I should have left the country.

"However, it was not to be. It might have been well for all had I never thought of it. For I'm a man who, when he once places an object before him, will not give it up without trying. I can wait as well as strike, and know what's to be got by one and t'other. Well, what I've once proposed to myself I don't forego, and that helped to hold me where I was.

"The nature of the beast, Sturk, and his circumstances were dangerous. 'Twas necessary for my safety to make away with him. I tried it by several ways. I made a quarrel between him and Toole, but somehow it never came to a duel; and a worse one between him and Nutter, but that too failed to come to a fight. It was to be, sir, and my time had come. What I long suspected arrived, and he told me in his own study he knew me, and wanted money. The money didn't matter; of that I could spare abundance, though 'tis the nature of such a tax to swell to confiscation. But the man who gets a sixpence from you on such terms is a tyrant and your master, and I can't brook slavery.

"I owed the fellow no ill-will; upon my honour, as a gentleman; I forgive him; as I hope he has forgiven me. It was all fair he should try. We can't help our instincts. There's something wolfish in us all. I was vexed at his d——d folly,

though, and sorry to have to put him out of the way. However, I saw I must be rid of him.

"There was no immediate hurry. I could afford to wait a little. I thought he would walk home on the night I met him. He had gone into town in Colonel Strafford's carriage. It returned early in the afternoon without him. I knew his habits; he dined at Keating's ordinary at four o'clock; and Mercer, whom he had to speak with, would not see him, on his bill of exchange business, in his counting-house. Sturk told me so; and he must wait till half-past five at his lodgings. What he had to say was satisfactory, and I allowed five minutes for that.

"Then he might come home in a coach. But he was a close fisted fellow and loved a shilling; so it was probable he would walk. His usual path was by the Star Fort, and through the thorn woods between that and the Magazine. So I met him. I said I was for town, and asked him how he had fared in his business; and turned with him, walking slowly as though to hear. I had that loaded whalebone in my pocket, and my sword, but no postol. It was not the place for firearms; the noise would have made an alarm. So I turned sharp upon him and felled him. He knew by an intuition what was about to happen, for as the blow fell he yelled 'murder.' That d——d fellow, Nutter, in the wood at our right, scarce a hundred yards away, halloed in answer. I had but time to

strike him two blows on the top of his head that might have killed an ox. I felt the metal sink at the second in his skull, and would have pinked him through with my sword, but the fellow was close on me, and I thought I knew the voice for Nutter's. I stole through the bushes swiftly, and got along into the hollow under the Magazine, and thence on.

"There was a slight fog upon the Park, and I met no one. I got across the Park-wall, over the quarry, and so down by the stream at Coyle's, and on to the road near my house. No one was in sight, so I walked down to Chapelizod to show myself. Near the village tree I met Dr. Toole. I asked him if Nutter was in the club, and he said no—nor at home, he believed, for his boy had seen him more than half-an-hour ago leave his hall-door, dressed for the road.

"So I made as if disappointed, and turned back again, assured that Nutter was the man. I was not easy, for I could not be sure that Sturk was dead. Had I been allowed a second or two more, I'd have made sure work of it. Still I was *nearly* sure. I could not go back now and finish the business. I could not say whether he lay there any longer, and if he did, how many men Nutter might have about him by this time. So, sir, the cast was made, I could not mend it, and must abide my fortune, be it good or ill.

"Not a servant saw me go out or return. I

came in quietly, and went into my bed-room and lighted a candle. 'Twas a blunder, a blot, but a thousand to one it was not hit. I washed my hands. There was some blood on the whalebone, and on my fingers. I rolled the loaded whalebone up in a red handkerchief, and locked it into my chest of drawers, designing to destroy it, which I did, so soon as the servants were in bed; and then I felt a chill and a slight shiver;—'twas only that I was an older man. I was cool enough, but a strain on the mind was more to me then than twenty years before. So I drank a dram, and I heard a noise outside my window. 'Twas then that stupid dog, Cluffe, saw me, as he swears.

"Well, next day Sturk was brought home; Nutter was gone, and the suspicion attached to him. That was well. But, though Pell pronounced that he must die without recovering consciousness, and that the trepan would kill him instantaneously, I had a profound misgiving that he might recover speech and recollection. I wrote as exact a statement of the case to my London physician—a very great man—as I could collect, and had his answer, which agreed exactly with Doctor Pell's. 'Twas agreed on all hands the trepan would be certain death. Days, weeks, or months—it mattered not what the interval—no returning glimmer of memory could light his death-bed. Still, sir, I presaged evil. He was so long about dying.

"I'm telling you everything, you see. I offered Irons what would have been a fortune to him—he was attending occasionally in Sturk's sick-room, and assisting in dressing his wounds—to watch his opportunity and smother him with a wet handkerchief. I would have done it myself afterwards, on the sole opportunity that offered, had I not been interrupted.

"I engaged, with Mrs. Sturk's approval, Doctor Dillon. I promised him five hundred guineas to trepan him. That young villain, I could prove, bled Alderman Sherlock to death to please the Alderman's young wife. Who'd have thought the needy profligate would have hesitated to plunge his trepan into the brain of a dying man—a corpse, you may say, already—for five hundred guineas? I was growing feverish under the protracted suspense. I was haunted by the apprehension of Sturk's recovering his consciousness and speech, in which case I should have been reduced to my present rueful situation; and I was resolved to end that cursed uncertainty.

"When I thought Dillon had forgot his appointment in his swinish vices, I turned my mind another way. I resolved to leave Sturk to *nature*, and clench the case against Nutter, by evidence I would have compelled Irons to swear. As it turned out, *that* would have been the better way. Had Sturk died without speaking, and Nutter hanged for his death, the question could have

opened no more, and Irons would have been nailed to my interest.

"I viewed the problem every way. I saw the danger from the first, and provided many expedients, which, one after the other, fortune frustrated. I can't confidently say even now that it would have been wiser to leave Sturk to die, as the doctors said he must. I had a foreboding, in spite of all they could say, he would wake up before he died and denounce me. If 'twas a mistake, 'twas a fated one, and I could not help it.

"So, sir, you see I've nothing to blame myself for—though all has broken down

"I guessed when I heard the sound at the hall-door of my house that Sturk or Irons had spoken, and that they were come to take me. Had I broken through them, I might have made my escape. It was long odds against me, but still I had a chance—that's all. And the matter affecting my Lord Dunoran's innocence, I'm ready to swear, if it can serve his son—having been the undesigned cause of some misfortunes to you, my lord, in my lifetime."

Lord Dunoran said nothing, he only bowed his head.

So Dangerfield, when his statement respecting the murder of Beauclerc had been placed clearly in writing, made oath of its truth, and immediately when this was over (he had, while they were preparing the statement, been walking up

and down his flagged chamber), he grew, all on a sudden, weak, and then very flushed, and they thought he was about to take a fit; but speedily he recovered himself, and in five minutes' time was much as he had been at the commencement.

After my lord and Mr. Armstrong went away, he had the gaoler with him, and seemed very sanguine about getting his pardon, and was very brisk and chatty, and said he'd prepare his petition in the morning, and got in large paper for drafting it on, and said, "I suppose at the close of this commission they will bring me up for judgment; that will be the day after to-morrow, and I must have my petition ready." And he talked away like a man who had got a care off his mind, and is in high spirits; and when grinning, beetle-browed Giant Despair shook his hand, and wished him luck at parting, he stopped him, laying his white hand upon his herculean arm, and, said he, "I've a point to urge they don't suspect. I'm sure of my liberty: what do you think of that—hey?" and he laughed. "And when I get away what do you say to leaving this place and coming after me. Upon my life, you must, sir. I like you, and if you don't, rot me, but I'll come and take you away myself."

So they parted in a sprightly, genial way; and in the morning the turnkey called the gaoler up at an unseasonable hour, and told him that Mr. Dangerfield was dead.

The gaoler lay in the passage outside the prisoner's cell, with his bed across the door, which was locked, and visited him at certain intervals. The first time he went in there was nothing remarkable. It was but half-an-hour after the gaoler had left. Mr. Dangerfield, for so he chose to be called, was dozing very quietly in his bed, and just opened his eyes, and nodded on awaking, as though he would say, "Here I am," but did not speak.

When, three hours later, the officer entered, having lighted his candle at the lamp, he instantly recoiled. "The room felt so queer," said he, "I thought I'd a fainted, and I drew back. I tried it again a bit further in, and 'twas worse, and the candle almost went out—'twas as if the devil was there. I drew back quick, and I called the prisoner, but no word was there. Then I locks the door, and called Michael; and when he came we called the prisoner again, but to no purpose. Then we opened the door, and I made a rush, and smashed the glass of the window to let in air. We had to wait outside a good while before we could venture in; and when we did, there he was lying like a man asleep in his bed, with his nightcap on, and his hand under his cheek, and he smiling down on the flags, very sly, like a man who has won something cleverly. He was dead, and his limbs cold by this time."

There was an inquest. Mr. Dangerfield "looked

very composed in death," says an old letter, and he lay "very like sleep" in his bed, "his fingers under his cheek and temple," with the countenance turned "a little downward, as if looking upon something on the floor," with an "ironical smile;" so that the ineffaceable lines of sarcasm, I suppose, were traceable upon that jaundiced mask.

Some said it was a heart disease, and others an exhalation from the prison floor. He was dead, that was all the jury could say for certain, and they found 'twas "by the visitation of God." The gaoler, being a superstitious fellow, was plaguily nervous about Mr. Dangerfield's valediction, and took clerical advice upon it, and for several months after became a very serious and ascetic character; and I do believe that the words were spoken in reality with that sinister jocularity in which his wit sported like church-yard meteors, when crimes and horrors were most in his mind.

The niece of this gaoler said she well remembered her uncle, when a very old man, three years before the rebellion, relating that Mr. Dangerfield came by his death in consequence of some charcoal in a warming-pan he had prevailed on him to allow him for his bed, he having complained of cold. He got it with a design to make away with himself, and it was forgotten in the room. He placed it under the bed, and waited until the

first call of the turnkey was over, and then he stuffed his surtout into the flue of the small fire-place, which afforded the only ventilation of his cell, and so was smothered. It was not till the winter following that the gaoler discovered, on lighting a fire there, that the chimney was stopped. He had a misgiving about the charcoal before, and now he was certain. Of course, he said nothing about his suspicions at first, nor of his discovery afterwards.

So, sometimes in my musings, when I hear of clever young fellows taking to wild courses, and audaciously rushing—where good Christians pray they may not be led—into temptation, there rises before me, with towering forehead and scoffing face, a white image smoking his pipe grimly by a plutonic fire; and I remember the words of the son of Sirach—"The knowledge of wickedness is not wisdom, neither at any time the counsel of sinners prudence."

Mr. Irons, of course, left Chapelizod. He took with him the hundred guineas which Mr. Dangerfield had given him, as, also, it was said, a handsome addition made to that fund by open-handed Dr. Walsingham; but somehow, being much pressed for time, he forgot good Mistress Irons, who remained behind and let lodgings pretty much as usual, and never heard from that time forth anything very distinct about him; and latterly it was thought was, on the whole,

afraid than desirous of his turning up again.

Doctor Toole, indeed, related in his own fashion, at the Phœnix, some years later, a rumour which, however, may have turned out to be no better than smoke.

"News of Zekiel, by Jove! The prophet was found, sir, with a friend in the neighbourhood of Hounslow, with a brace of pistols, a mask, a handful of slugs, and a powder-horn in his pocket, which he first gave to a constable, and then made his compliments to a justice o' the peace, who gave him and his friend a note of commendation to my Lord Chief Justice, and his lordship took such a fancy to both that, by George, he sent them in a procession in his best one-horse coach, with a guard of honour and a chaplain, the high-sheriff dutifully attending, through the city, where, by the king's commands, they were invested with the grand collar of the order of the hempen cravat, sir, and with such an attention to their comfort they were not required to descend from their carriage, by George, and when it drove away they remained in an easy, genteel posture, with their hands behind their backs, in a sort of an ecstasy, and showed their good humour by dancing a reel together with singular lightness and agility, and keeping it up till they were both quite out of breath, when they remained quiet for about half an hour to cool, and then went off to

pay their respects to the President of the College of Surgeons," and so forth; but I don't think Irons had pluck for a highwayman, and I can't therefore, altogether, believe the story.

We all know Aunt Rebecca pretty well by this time. And looking back upon her rigorous treatment of Puddock, recorded in past chapters of this tale, I think I can now refer it all to its true source.

She was queer, quarrelsome, sometimes nearly intolerable; but she was generous and off-handed, and made a settlement, reserving only a life interest, and nearly all afterwards to Puddock.

"But in a marriage settlement," said the Attorney (so they called themselves in those days), "it is usual;" and here his tone became so gentle that I can't say positively what he uttered.

"Oh—a—*that*," she said, "a—well you can speak to Lieutenant Puddock, if you wish. I only say for myself a life estate; Lieutenant Puddock can deal with the remainder as he pleases." And Aunt Rebecca actually blushed a pretty little pink blush. I believe she did not think there was much practical utility in the Attorney's suggestion, and if an angel in her hearing had said of her what he once said of Sarah, she would not have laughed indeed, but I think she would have shaken her head.

She was twenty years and upwards his senior; but I don't know which survived the other,

for in this life the battle is not always to the strong.

Their wedding was a very quiet affair, and the talk of the village was soon directed from it to the approaching splendours of the union of Miss Gertrude and my Lord Dunoran.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE STORY ENDS.

The old minutes of the Irish House of Lords can better explain than I the parliamentary process by which all the consequences of the judgment against the late Lord Dunoran were abrogated, as respected his son. An ancient name rescued from the shadow of dishonour, and still greater estates, made my Lord and Lady as happy as such things can. So for the recluse Mervyn, and the fair Gertrude Chattesworth, our story ends like a fairy tale.

A wedding in those days was a celebration and a feast; and it was deemed fitting that the union of Gertrude Chattesworth and the youthful Lord Dunoran should await the public vindication of his family, and the authentic restoration of all their rights and possessions. On the eve of this happy day, leaning on the youthful arm of kindly Dan Loftus, there came a figure not seen there for many months before, very much changed, grown, oh, how old! It was the good Rector who asked to see Miss Gertrude.

And so when he entered the room, she ran to

meet him with a little cry; and she threw her arms about his neck and sobbed a good deal on that old, cassocked shoulder, and longed to ask him to let her be as a daughter to him. But he understood her, and, after a while, he wished her joy, very kindly. And my Lord Dunoran came in and was very glad to see him, and very tender and reverent too; and the good Doctor, as he could not be at the wedding, wished to say a word "on the eve of the great change which my dear young friend—little Gertie, we used to call her—is about to make." And so he talked to them both. It was an affectionate little homily, and went on something in this sort.

"But I need not say how honourable an estate it is, only, my Lord, you will always remember your wooing is not over with your wedding. As you did first choose your love, you must hereafter love your choice. In Solomon's Song, the Redeemer the bridegroom, and the Church His spouse, one calls the other 'love,' to show that though both do not honour alike, yet both should love alike.

"And always be kind, and kinder the more her weakness needs it. Elkanah says to his wife, 'am not I better unto thee than ten sons?' As though he favoured her more for that which she thought herself despised. So a good husband will not love his wife less, but comfort her more for her infirmities, as this man did, that she may

bear with his infirmities too. And if she be jealous—ay, they will be jealous"—

He spoke in a reverie, with a sad fond look, not a smile, but something like a smile, and a little pensive shake of the head; he was thinking perhaps of very old times. And "my Lord" glanced with a sly smile at Gertrude, who was looking on the carpet with, I think, a blush, and I am sure saw my Lord's glance seeking hers, but made as though she did not.

"If she be jealous, her jealousy, you know, is still the measure of her love. Bless God that he hath made thee to her so dear a treasure that she cannot hide her fears and trouble lest she should lose even a portion of thy love; and let thy heart thank *her* too.

"And if the husband would reprove her, it must be in such a mood as if he did chide with himself, and his words like Jonathan's arrows, which were not shot to hurt but to give warning. She must have no words but loving words from thee. She is come to thee as to a sanctuary to defend her from hurt, and canst thou hurt her thyself? Does the king trample his crown? Solomon calls the wife the crown of her husband; therefore he who despiseth her woundeth his own honour. I am resolved to honour virtue in what sex soever I find it."

The Doctor was speaking this like a soliloquy, slowly, and looking on the floor.

"And I think in general I shall find it more in women than in men."

Here the young people exchanged another smile, and the Doctor looked up and went on.

"Ay—though weaker and more infirmly guarded, I believe they are better; for every one is so much the better, by how much he comes nearer to God; and man in nothing is more like Him than in being merciful. Yet, woman is far more merciful than man. God is said to be love; and I am sure in that quality woman everywhere transcends."

The Doctor's serious discourses were a mosaic of old divines and essayists, and Greek and Latin authors, as the writings of the Apostolic Fathers are, in great measure, a tesselation of holy writ. He assumed that every body knew where to find them. His business was only to repeat the truth wherever gleaned. So I can't tell how much was the Doctor's and how much theirs.

And when he had done upon this theme, and had risen to take leave, he said in his gentle and simple way—

"And I brought you a little present—a necklace and ear-rings—old-fashioned, I'm afraid—they were my dear mother's diamonds, and were to have been——"

Here there was a little pause—they knew what was in his mind—and he dried his eyes quickly.

"And won't you take them, Gertie, for poor

little Lily's keepsake. And so—well, well—little Gerty—I taught you your catechism—Dear, dear! Little Gerty going to be married! And may God Almighty bless her to you, and you to her, with length of days, and all goodness; and with children, the inheritors of your fair forms, and all your graces, to gladden your home with love and duty, and to close your eyes, at last, with tender reverence; and to walk after you, when your time is over, in the same happy and honourable paths."

Miss Gertrude was crying, and with two quick little steps she took his knotted old hand, and kissed it fervently and said—

"I thank you, sir, you've always been so good to me; I wish I could tell you—and won't you come to us, sir, and see us very often—when we are settled—and bring good Mr. Loftus, and dear old Sally; and thank you, sir, with all my heart, for your beautiful presents, and for your noble advice, sir, which I will never forget, and for your blessing, and I wish I could show you how very much I love and reverence you."

And my Lord Dunoran, though he was smiling, looked as if he had been crying too. But men, you know, don't like to be detected in that weakness, though everybody knows there are moments when *bonus Homerus dormitat.*

Good Doctor Walsingham made Dan Loftus his curate. But when in the course of time a day came when the old Rector was to meet his pa-

rishioners no more, and the parish was vacant, I do not hear that honest Dan succeeded to it. Indeed I'm afraid that it needs sometimes a spice of the devil, or at least of the world, to get on in the church. But Lord Dunoran took him with him on the embassage to Lisbon, and afterwards he remained in his household as his domestic chaplain, much beloved and respected. And there he had entire command of his Lordship's fine library, and compiled and composed, and did everything but publish and marry.

In due time the fair Magnolia made the amorous and formidable O'Flaherty happy. Single blessedness was not for her, and it is due to her to say, she turned out one of the best housewives in Chapelizod, and made the Fireworker account for every shilling of his pay and other revenues, and managed the commissariat and all other departments to admiration. She cured her lord very nearly of boosing, and altogether of duelling. One combat only he fought after his marriage, and it was rumoured that the blooming Magnolia actually chastised the gigantic delinquent with her own fair hand. That, however, I don't believe. But unquestionably she did, in other ways, lead the contumacious warrior so miserable a life for some months after that, as he averred to the Major, with tears in his eyes, it would have been "more to his taste to have been shot on the occasion." At first, of course, the Fireworker showed

fight, and sometimes broke loose altogether; but in the end his "mouth was made," his paces formed, and he became a very serviceable and willing animal. But if she was strong she was also generous, and very popular for her good-nature and fearlessness. And they made a very happy, as well as a comely couple. And many handsome children were nursed at her fair breast, and drew many a Celtic virtue from that kindly fountain; and one of the finest grenadiers who lay in his red coat and sash within the French lines on the field of Waterloo, in that great bivouac which knows no *reveille* save the last trumpet, was a scion of that fine military stock.

At length came the day of the nuptials—a grand day for Belmont—a grand day for the town. Half a dozen flags were up and floating in the autumnal sun. The band of the Royal Irish Artillery played noble and cheering strains upon the lawns of Belmont. There were pipers and fiddlers beside for rustic merry-makers under the poplars. Barrels of strong ale and sparkling cider were broached on the grass; and plenty of substantial fare kept the knives and forks clattering under the marquees by the hedge row. The rude and hospitable feudalism of old times had not died out yet; marriage being an honourable estate, the bride and bridegroom did not steal away in a travelling carriage, trying to pass for something else, to unknown regions, but remained courageously upon

the premises, the central figures of a genial gala.

Need I describe the wedding? It always seems to me that I saw it, and see it still, I've heard the old folk talk it over so often. The reader's fancy will take that business off my hands. "What's a play without a marriage? and what is a marriage if one sees nothing of it?" says Sir Roger, in Gay's tragi-comic pastoral. "Let him have his humour, but set the doors wide open that we may see how all goes on."

(Sir Roger at the door, pointing.)

"So natural! d'ye see now, neighbours? The ring i'faith. To have and to hold! Right again; well play'd, Doctor; well play'd, son *Thomas*. Come, come, I'm satisfied. Now for the fiddles and dances."

And so are we—now, then, for the fiddles and dances! And let those who love to foot it keep it up—after sack-posset and stocking thrown—till two o'clock i' the morning; and the elder folk, and such as are "happy thinking," get home betimes; and smiling still, get to their beds; and with hearty laughter—as it were mellowed by distance—still in their ears, and the cheery scrape of the fiddle, all pervading, still humming on; and the pleasant scuffle of light feet, and with kindly ancient faces, and blushing young one's all round in airy portraiture; grinning, roguish, faithful, fuddled old servants, beflowered and liveried,

pronouncing benedictions at the foot of the stairs, and pocketing their veils; and buxom maids in their best Sunday finery, giggling and staring, with eyes staring out of their heads, at the capering "quality," through the half-open doors; let us try to remember the "sentiment" delivered by that ridiculous dog, Tom Toole, after supper, at which we all laughed so heartily. And, ah! there were some pretty faces that ought to have been there—faces that were pleasant to see, but that won't smile or blush any more; and I missed them, though I said nothing. And so, altogether, it went down among my pleasant recollections, and I think will always remain so, for it was all kindly, and had its root in the heart; and the affections were up and stirring, and mixed in the dance with the Graces, and shook hands kindly with old father Bacchus; and so I pull my night-cap about my ears, drop the extinguisher on the candle and wish you all pleasant dreams.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.